Gandhi and Nehru

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Preface

THIS BOOK HAS GROWN FROM TIME TO TIME. For many years, I was a perplexed student of whatever Gandhi said and did and for over twenty-five years I knew Jawaharlal Nehru fairly closely. It was Nehru that helped me to understand Gandhi and the progress of Nehru's own understanding of Gandhi has often seemed a fascinating subject to me. So it has been to many others. I have tried to present here my considered estimate of Gandhi and of Nehru and of the relations between them.

I have written much on Gandhi and on Nehru through the years. Not all the material could be used here. The section on Gandhi was largely written in the form of articles soon after his death and subsequently, and they have been edited and put together here. The section on Nehru was similarly written largely in the form of articles soon after his death and subsequently, and they have been edited and put together here. I have had little to add. The articles were written from the inspiration of the moment but, it is hoped, with a historical sense. It seemed it would be useful to add a study, in some depth, of the relations between Gandhi and Nehru. This section, "The Dialogue", is entirely new.

The writer hopes that the book will help understanding of Gandhi and Nehru, especially of the relations between them, their differences in outlook, their different attitudes to problems, their closeness and yet their separateness, the

identity they achieved but without either of them surrendering his individuality, and their place in history.

M. Chalapathi Rau

New Delhi,
May 1, 1967

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The Master

I

THERE WAS NOTHING TO ADD TO THE HOMAGE in which the whole human race had joined, all the countries, all the religions, all the creeds, presidents and kings, those who had little understood him and those who had always loved him, followers and opponents, those who had scoffed at him as a half-naked fakir and those who had compared him to a grey eminence. For those to whom his work and life seemed intimate there would be no end to mourning, and the world seemed a vast cremation ground, a waste land of burning hearts. The people of India stood transfixed in a Calvary of tears where the second Prince of Peace had been crucified. For there was nothing apocryphal about him; no legends could cloud his armour of simplicity. He was real, as perhaps no other great man in history had been real. So it had been when he first burst upon the scene. There were times when he seemed a remote star in Sevagram, a voice from seclusion unto the wilderness where we struggled, a distant teacher of truth. But in the last months of agony, he came back to us with his old intimacy and became part of the multitudes and they saw him as they had seen him in the days before, even the bare anatomy of his agony. He had sought no martyrdom, though it came to him, as it has come to true martyrs. Many times he seemed lost to us, yet here was a time when we needed him most. He wanted to live he was killed.

The thing we were afraid of for many years might come to pass; not to follow him when he had been alive but to worship him when he was dead. To make a god of him was to worship him, not to follow him. He was no god and he pretended to be no god. It was the duty of those who were stricken with shrift not to rush to erect memorials but to realize the uselessness of a new totemism, the creation of new cults. That would be against the mission of his life. The story of Gandhi was the story of a man among men who by unceasing faith and unceasing work attained a kingliness of spirit, suffered intensely for his fellow men and in the agony of crucifixion became transfigured from the Son of Man into the Son of God. He felt he was a common man; he made errors and confessed them; he loved to live and feel and laugh with common men. Their affairs absorbed him. The Viceroy of India was no greater to him. Future generations might wonder at him or worship him but those among whom he lived have to hold fast to his work, if they were not to add a caricature of another faith to the world's many mouldering faiths.

Gandhi seemed many men, Francis of Assisi for love of fellow creatures, St. Paul and St. Augustine, Socrates with his catechism, Mazzini, Garibaldi, marching with his handful of followers, Rousseau, Buddha and the first of Jains. To present him as a teacher, as a moral genius, as a practitioner of truth, as a political leader, as a devotee only is to present the torso of a sculptured god. To compartmentalize him is only less cruel than to crucify him. He was a complete man who did not turn his back on life. A life of vows did not keep him behind shutters. He contacted existence at all points. He led great political movements to success; he broke cultural and economic tyranny; he expounded the economics of the poor; he taught a new medicine and a new hygiene; he restored to us our inheritance; he made swadeshi a symbol of self-reliance, a habit, not a doctrine. A great journalist he

edited some of the greatest journals that were ever published; he fought untouchability; he experimented with diet and with his life and he died practising that harmony which is beyond all conflict. All this went on round ceaseless experimentation. Those who had betrayed him or failed to understand him were indulging in the inadequacy of post mortem homage. If that homage were real, his death was to be the beginning of real understanding. There was no problem on which he did not think or did not arrive at some truth, not by intuition, as generally supposed, but by ceaseless thinking and ceaseless practice.

Gandhi must remain the human Gandhi, if we are not to forget him. If we forget him, as people forgot Christ, we would crucify him again if he were to appear tomorrow. His life is plain; his teachings are as plain; for all his life he went on thinking aloud and not in parables. To the younger generations, who would not see him clearly behind the mist of mahatmaship, there was no better way to understand him than to begin with his birth. For early and in South Africa he was seen in his spiritual sprouting, wrestling with his weaknesses of flesh and spirit, gathering out of the struggle his indomitable spirit. The emergence of a mere man into a mahatma was no miracle, though it was a story like no man's story, a hymn of effort. And as human drama, it was a crescendo of aspiration, from obscure birth to the terrific climax, the early days in Porbandar, the awkward little boy with strange longings, the bleak religious background and dim stirrings of the spirit, the trips to London and its strange society, the discovery of Thoreau and Tolstoy and other kindred spirits, the strange adventure to South Africa in defence of a strange people helpless among strangely savage whites, his lonely vigil against odds, the distant offers of help from Gokhale, the return to India, the first dramatic speech at the ceremony of the foundation-stone laying of Banaras University, the panic of liberals at this dauntless little man

in pugree, the great days of transformation and Das and Motilal and the Ali Brothers, the Khilafat Movement and the new political cries and the great awakening as it became a permanent light in the land, the man in loin cloth fasting and praying and touring, the spectacular Dandi march, the frail beggar begging for Bihar relief and begging for Harijans, the lyric days at Sevagram in the sun-scorched village behind mud walls whither pilgrims marched as they had marched to no living man's hut, the Quit India adventure when the country was plunged into darkness and there seemed no light except the taper in Aga Khan Palace, Kasturba and her epic of human struggle, Mahadev with his devotion and inimitable charm, these and other things crowd the long vistas of a life that gave meaning to millions of lives till the last days of carnage. He had said:

> "When I hear shouts of 'Victory to Mahatma Gandhi' every sound of the phrase pierces my heart like an arrow. When I find that people's time and energy was spent in this useless shouting, while at the same time real work is given the go-by, how I wish that they should, instead of shouting my name, prepare and light up a funeral pyre for me and that I might leap into it and once for all extinguish the fire that is scorching my heart!"

II

As Gandhi's ashes were strewn about the land, we were for a time left with the emptiness of ourselves. For thirteen days we had known unutterable sadness and consoled ourselves with the mind's littleness and death's recompense of immortality, but how shall we fill the emptiness except with the amplitude of vision, compassion and experience which had been Gandhi. The hands that had raised Mohenjodaro and

Ajanta and laboured for the Buddha murdered the Mahatma in a land where mahatmas are usually honoured. Yet to allow the millions to add a god to their pantheon would be poor penitence; it might seem a concession to human nature compassed of so much weakness but would be an insult to Gandhi's memory. St. Peter's and St. Paul's are not the highest expressions of the Christian faith; it lives best in its living martyrs. Gandhi wanted not new churches and new temples but the church of universal religion and human temples of service. To think that Gandhism was dead with Gandhi would be poor understanding, for there was no Gandhism. There was not the finality or even the consistency of a creed in his teaching. His scripture was life, his *sutras* were suffering and service. His thoughts and actions and the energies which he released will move us till ages ahead. After the mourning of millions of men, there was need for deep thinking on the epic life that had closed.

Gandhi's death could not be the beginning of national and sectarian pride in him. He was not India's possession, though he mirrored the spirit of India, loved and liberated India. He was like Socrates who said: "I am not an Athenian nor a Greek but a citizen of the world." His country was the world and his religion was to do good. He wrote:

> "For me patriotism is the same as humanity. I am patriotic because I am human and humane. It is not exclusive. I will not hurt England or Germany to serve India. Imperialism has no place in my scheme of life. . . .
>
> "A country has to be free in order that it may die, if necessary, for the benefit of the world. My love, therefore, or nationalism or my idea of nationalism is that my country may become free, that if need be the whole of the country may die so that the human race may live. There is no room for race hatred there. Let that be our nationalism.
>
> "I believe in the essential unity of man and, for that

matter, of all that lives. Therefore, I believe that if one man gains spirituality, the whole world gains with him and if one man fails, the whole world fails with him."

The homage of the world was an expression of this feeling of oneness when one man's life and death added ages to the stature of the human race. The world did not seem to be ready for non-violence even after a second world war. More painful experience might have provided a pulpit in the hearts of men for Gandhi's message. But his death came as the explosion of millions of lives and the human spirit felt enriched and may succeed in filling the emptiness. Like Tagore, Gandhi did not believe in narrow domestic walls. His life was a sermon on unity to the nations of the world. Gandhi and Tagore were the kindred spirits of our enlightenment.

The story of resurrection was not a meaningless story and Gandhi seemed to be aware of its material, apart from its spiritual, significance. Sushila Nayar, his devoted companion for many years, has told us how during his confinement in Aga Khan Palace, when someone remarked that his followers did not possess the personality to carry his message in the living form to the masses, Gandhi said: "Which of Christ's disciples had given proof of great ability during his lifetime? God gave them the strength to propagate Christ's teachings only after he was gone." Peter was not a true Christian when Jesus was alive but through his own martyrdom a power after the crucifixion. Not only the people but the government were pledged to fulfil the mission of Gandhi. It might seem an empty boast, for to fulfil his mission would not be easy for even a state where the rulers and people are saints. But the central teaching of Gandhi's life is not difficult of definition or effort. That can be summed up as service to the poor millions. It was the duty of the state to wipe away the poverty and make freedom real. For Gandhi thought of freedom as freedom from social and economic as much as

from political bondage. His vision was of an India without any label, but something near true socialism and transcending it. There were the other essentials of his teaching, non-violence, which implies non-violent and, therefore voluntary dispossession of exploiting classes, the underlying unity of all religions, and adherence to truth. To the missionaries of service he prescribed non-attachment as a motto. If we let go the hold we had acquired on these truths, illustrated by his practice, we would lose our right to honour him or mourn him. The many memorials to be raised would be mockeries. God must appear in the shape of bread and not rise and disappear in the sorrowing waters of the Sangam at Prayag.

III

Gandhi was the universal man and there was no difference between Gandhi the saint and Gandhi the statesman. Since he claimed to be no saint whose place was in the Himalayas and since he sought no canonization, it was wrong for people to put him on a pedestal for his saintly character and revile him for his political work. Apart from his place as a hero in history, the standards of political thinking have to be overhauled to measure the testament of his faith and the equally eloquent testament of his deeds. If we value his vision, we must see his political contribution in proper light. We cannot divorce his saintliness from his satyagraha; he was no political cardinal who applied canonical cynicism to statecraft. He did not think in terms of ideologies and catchphrases; nor did he seek political victories of accepted standards. Two effects of his application of moral law to politics were the definition of the moral equivalent to war, for which people had been groping, in the form of satyagraha, which he proved practicable on a large scale, and the narrowing of the bridge between

means and ends. It might be easy to refute him metaphysically but there has been no refutation of the proof he provided. The political campaigns he rallied, organized and led, his compromises, defeats and victories, the advances and retreats he seemed to make in terms of political strategy, his emphasis on effort without thought of results, the self-immolation he seemed to turn into law were all variations of this astounding contribution. Satyagraha was to him no froth of souls, as caricaturists have made it; non-violence was no cloak for cowardice, as the faint-hearted have represented it to be; Christian charity did not mean compromise with evil. Leaving aside his contribution to true internationalism, what was the contribution he made to our liberation, liberation in the largest sense?

Gandhi entered the Indian political scene with a faith and weapon he had forged in South Africa, a successful experiment which Tolstoy had blessed. The long dramatic marches of resisting Indians who refused to pay the £3 tax, the victory over the obduracy of Smuts and the confidence which the Indian community had attained after years of serfdom were transferred to the larger area and inertia of the home country. To say that Gandhi gave us self-respect is not wholly true. In spite of the air of mendicancy about our political struggle, there was Tilak who had courageously made sedition the breath of self-respecting Indians. But between individual breaches of law, ineffectual terrorism and perpetual prattle in councils, there seemed no way out and Gandhi showed the way. And here comes a contribution as original as Aristotle's to thought or Napoleon's to military strategy but which was confused with craftiness in some quarters. The campaign in Champaran and Kaira gave Gandhi self-assurance about his methods but no over-confidence. He had to deal with hesitant leadership and a pathetically contented people, and he dealt with both successfully. Alternative leadership except that of moderates in the councils

disappeared; the Indian continent was filled with discontent. The Rowlatt Act and Jallianwallah Bagh presented the concentrated evil of the British regime, masked by forms as the rule of law; Gandhi seemed to seize the opportunity. Whether it was intuition or genius or aberration, the progress of Gandhi's political philosophy seemed to run in the pattern now known as Gandhian non-violence. There were "Himalayan blunders" but there were the Himalayan achievements. In the successive phases of non-co-operation and civil disobedience, political discontent fought non-violent battles. The results were not spectacular like the Battle of Plassey or the Battle of Waterloo, but the advance was spectacular and lasting. Diarchy looked a bauble. The Simon Commission was laughed out of court. The R.T.C. was a music hall comedy. Even the Cripps Proposals were a cruel insult. Any compromise with freedom looked like moral collapse. In 1920 Gandhi made us lose our fear of jails; in 1930 we lost our fear of losing property; in 1942 we lost our fear of losing lives, a spectacular advance in moral courage. With each struggle the consciousness spread and more and more millions came into the battle. India's vision remained unsullied. There were disappointments but they were heartaches of freedom. If there was more genuine discontent after him, more fearlessness, more awareness of rights and duties, more of life, less of illusion, the blame and the credit must go to Gandhi. But while it was said of Bismarck that he had made Germany great and the Germans small, nobody can say of Gandhi that he did not raise Indians to the measure of his sacrifice and vision. He made heroes out of common clay, said Gokhale. The race of heroes may have dwindled though through no fault of his, but he imparted creative vibration to the clay.

Gandhi took up our dreary doggerel of political resistance and rewrote it into a passion play of tremendous power and pathos. There may seem to be gaps, but they were not gaps

in Gandhi's efforts. The underlying unity of the country helped him in a torrid political region, the complexity of the country beat him now and then. His workers did not measure up to his standards, there was weariness. But there were rallying periods and the rallying spirit was Gandhi. There was no alternative leadership, though there were attempts; there was never an alternative method. He was rejected often, or sensing the atmosphere he withdrew but only to be called back to the leadership; so it was after the tiredness of the council entry programme, after the office acceptance of 1937 and the outbreak of the war, after the failure of the Cripps Mission, after the June 3 plan when we seemed lost. What was the measure of this failure? It was piecemeal understanding and piecemeal application of his teaching, retreat from work, weariness of the flesh or failure of the spirit, honest differences of approach which could not lead to a different method, lack of psychological insight into the people, gaps in instinct or integrity. There had been an increasing degree of doubt about his meticulous regard for means and there had been the posing of an antithesis between Gandhism and scientific socialism measured in terms of Marxism. The issue of means and ends is simple, if we avoid intricate metaphysics. Napoleon twisted the glorious aims of the French Revolution into an empire of violence and he and his empire perished by violence. Bismarck, the Kaiser and Hitler have supplied more examples. The American Revolution was saved from the seed of violence by the vision of the Fathers of the Constitution. The Soviet state has been saving itself from the violence of the Bolshevik Revolution by socialism. The materialistic bias of scientific socialism has not removed moral fears that if it succeeds by violence it may perish by violence. Nobody can deny this law of experience. How far Gandhi could be called a socialist has been a problem for socialists. His socialism, like most of his teachings, defied easy scientific analysis. His affinity with

Kropotkin and anarchism was clear. The Aga Khan has revealed an intimate talk he had with Gandhi in which Gandhi acknowledged his acceptance of the ultimate "withering away of the state", the central idea of socialism. Gandhi's idea of government and freedom was not as vague as inadequate discussions made it seem. He claimed to be a practical man. His non-violence was a practical programme, so also his vision of freedom. And this was his vision:

> "I shall strive for a constitution, which will release India from all thraldom and patronage and give her, if need be, the right to sin. I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony. There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability or the curse of intoxicating drinks and drugs. Women will enjoy the same rights as men. Since we shall be at peace with all the rest of the world, neither exploiting, nor being exploited, we should have the smallest army imaginable. All interests not in conflict with the interests of the dumb millions will be scrupulously respected, whether foreign or indigenous. Personally, I hate distinction between foreign and indigenous. This is the India of my dreams. . . . I shall be satisfied with nothing else."

There was to be no discordance between the kingdom of heaven without and the kingdom of heaven within. The India of Gandhi's dreams has been distant. But he helped us to secure the freedom necessary to make it real. Even the leaders of Pakistan acknowledged that he had wrought most for the freedom that we all enjoy. We must also know how to keep it and not squander it away. Gandhi's idea of political democracy must be treasured, if we are not to

lose our freedom; there is no better approach to the people than his. If we lose sight of the common man or lose touch with him, no textbook learning, or casuistry, or cleverness will save us. How else do we preserve our freedom?

IV

It is difficult to place the beginning of the Indian Revolution, as in the case of almost every revolution, for a revolution is a process, not an event. The Indian Revolution may have begun when Raja Rammohan Roy rallied the remnants of an inarticulate Indian renaissance, with the Great Rebellion of 1857, with the founding of the Congress, or with the sustained defiance which Tilak hurled at authority. Many influences went into it and many Indians contributed to it. But it was Gandhi that gave it a direction. The Indian Revolution was for a long time the Gandhian Revolution. He was a great unshackling force and even he could have been only dimly aware of the great corrosion his philosophy and activities would make in the torpor of Indian society. Non-violent non-co-operation was a dynamic explosion, in spite of its naive features. Against British rule, which was an empire of deception, a concrete attempt at rebellion would have been an act of despair in the void. Terrorism and other acts of valiant idealism led to martyrdom but did not further political liberation. The people were not prepared for it. The empty ritual of civilization deceived them: the railways and roads, posts and telegraphs, dummy legislatures and Indianization of executive councils, the courts of law dispensing justice, the clerical layers of Indian society which provided jobs for the educated, the schools, colleges and universities which were turning out caricatures of culture in cap and gown. Gandhi assaulted the whole citadel of illusion, the English glitter of Indian slavery, the non-violent form of

oppression which drained the blood of the nation through subtle economic processes. Dadabhai Naoroji, Romesh Chunder Dutt and Dinshaw Waccha were among those who had unveiled the nakedness of the economic overlordship and wrote powerfully of the constant drain of India's wealth. The whiskered Johnnies of the East India Company had shaken the pagoda trees of the East till they were bare: British rule had killed artisanship and cottage industries. Even the need for raw materials did not accelerate agricultural production. Gandhi gave in the triple boycott the answer to this emasculation of the nation. To the British hold on India established in a decade after the Great Rebellion through conquest of the cotton lands of the country, founding of universities and establishment of high courts, the triple boycott of foreign cloth, educational institutions and law courts was the answer which contained a whole philosophy of economics.

It is not established that the boycott, which had first found expression during the agitation against partition of Bengal, was a success. Non-violent non-co-operation had to be given effective expression in civil disobedience. The success of Gandhi's non-violence on the political plane was a result of the apparent non-violent character of the British regime. But Gandhi demonstrated the reality behind the appearance, as after Jallianwallah Bagh. And he fought against the reality. The success of the acceleration of the revolt against British rule was no longer in doubt. The British ruler, whether the Viceroy or the local magistrate, was no longer a Grand Mogul. Indians held their head high. They lost their reverence for the hypnotism of English thought and for the enchantments of the English language and literature. The liberalism of Mill and Burke was displaced by new philosophy. The western mode of dress and western manner became anachronistic and un-Indian. Indigenous literatures, indigenous science and indigenous industries received a fresh lease of

life. We turned inwards instead of looking appealingly to Whitehall. Mendicancy was displaced by open defiance. Khadi and the Gandhi cap became the uniform of revolution and the livery of freedom. Sacrifice was the slogan. The right to rebel against every known form of corruption was a right now understood and vigorously exercised and this consciousness of right was the new evangel for peasants and labourers. The social conscience was awakened to its own limitations. We were ashamed of our shortcomings. And as the successive movements of liberation drew women into their fold, the equality of women with men was accepted as an axiom without any discussion. No longer was it possible to enthrone the landlord, the prince or the rich man. They were unredeemed men who were to go at one time or another. The revolutionary urge was only partially fulfilled with the attainment of political freedom. The revolution had to go on.

The Indian Revolution without Gandhi has seemed unpredictable. Even in his lifetime it seemed uncontrollable. But we had the daily admonitions of the directing genius. It was certain that unless the revolution was shaped boldly and with a creative purpose, we would slowly be led to an interregnum, even a dark age. The responsibility for this failure would lie with the Indian middle class, which was a hybrid, unique in history. A parasitic class, created entirely by a century of foreign rule, an English-educated spurious class mostly cut off from the people, though battening itself on them, powerless to be creative and powerless to commit suicide, it failed both Gandhi's vision and Gandhi's movements. The few bright spots of the class might not redeem it from its social and cultural sterility. The life-giving Gandhian process might be checked at its fruitful phase. It might turn to religion for solace and to reaction for power. It was strongly allied to capitalism in its search for economic stability; it was seeking excuses for self-extinction in false cries of alarm. The 1942 revolution was a middle class revolu-

tion betrayed by the middle class. After Gandhi's death, in spite of its seeming contribution, it might become the bulwark of reaction. Gandhi provided the safeguard against possible betrayal by making his appeal universal. His cause was the cause of the poor, of labour and the peasants. And the revolution is passing into their hands. It will be safer with them and Gandhi knew it.

Gandhi's death found the Indian Revolution at its most critical phase. If he had lived he might have seen it established on the road to its final success. Vested interests sought protection behind non-violence and profiteers, landlords and princes have raised some false slogans in his name. If they gain in strength, reaction will arrest the revolution. If they lose, the unshackling process will unshackle more. Gandhi's philosophy could be turned into an anti-revolutionary direction. For the peasant he gave everything. He was not prepared to consider labour as anything less than part partner in industry. Yet he did not leave behind an economic doctrine for the new times, and slowly his economics were knocked out.

V

Gandhi's political philosophy may be accepted wholly or not, but his method of political work must be appreciated and studied. The substance of political development is more important than the form of the constitution; the spirit of democracy is more important than its ritual. Whether it is the president of a republic or a permanent civil service or a corps of political workers, the approach to the people must be real and not mechanical. There is too much wear and tear in political work, too much cumbrous formalism which reduces the results. The popular demagogue who rises to power usually loses the popular touch and sometimes his head in the seclusion of office. The usual conception of a

politician is that of a man lost at the hustings or party office, in parliament or in committees; political work has ceased to be human and become a procession of gesticulating puppets. Part of the ritual is the essential drudgery of representative institutions, but if the soul of democracy is to be saved, it is utterly inadequate. There must be perpetual concordance of mood and work between the politician and the people.

Gandhi did not start as a professional politician. There was little room for professional politicians in the politics of subject India. But it was not political aspirations that provided the daemon for the shaping spirit of his genius. For long he was the King-Emperor's loyal subject, a lawyer whose legal interest drew him to the social disabilities of the Indian community in South Africa. It was humanitarian service that kept him away from India for a long time. As his social philosophy progressed and non-violence became its directing force, he found in indentured labour the lowliest of the low. The work at Phoenix Settlement and Tolstoy Farm could be described only as that of a communist who practised communism without any attachment to dialectics or creed. He was a coolie barrister who worked among the coolies like a coolie. He hewed wood. He worked the printing press with his own hand. He was the chief cook. He washed dishes, swept and scavenged. He was a good shoemaker. A twenty-mile walk to Johannesburg and return on the same day was nothing to one who could do the work of three or four men. This discovery of a philosophy of service and its rigorous practice has no parallel. When he led the great protest march against the £3 tax from Newcastle into the Transvaal, he not only led as a leader but led in service, in cooking, sweeping and scavenging. At the Calcutta Congress, at the beginning of this century, which he visited on one of his trips to this country, he scavenged without the help of any other volunteers. This was the background of his training. If it looks like unnecessary waste of time for a political worker

we have only to ask how many other leaders have accomplished even one-tenth of his work. He saved time for the service of the people.

The emergence into mahatmaship, of which Gandhi was never conscious, did not take him away from the people into the niche of fame. The problem of the political worker is how to keep touch with the people, unspoilt by personal or political success. Even insight or imagination is no substitute for the human touch. If one is to improve his environment, he has to be a part of the environment. In his great crusade for the early discovered truths—non-violence, anti-untouchability, swadeshi and the right to rebel—Gandhi did not lose sight of the fact that if he was to be of service he must be not only for the people but of the people, a truth which even sincere trade union officials do not grasp. At Phoenix and Tolstoy Farm, so at Sabarmati and Sevagram and on his countrywide tours, Gandhi set his programme of work to the needs and moods of the people. Mahadev Desai admitted that at Sevagram the villagers did not mix with the ashram but by then Gandhi could not spare the time for the work which fell on people not equal to it. The political mechanism of Gandhi's caravan provided easy accessibility, openness, interest in detail, the vital personal touch. His camp was the nation's final court of appeal, as was seen recently in the case of decontrol. The third class travelling and the trudging on foot were no poses of a saintly soul but the working routine of a man who wanted to keep his eyes and ears open. The Socratic method was extended to a subcontinent. There were moments of chastisement as well as of stirring inspiration. The frail figure huddled up in a third class compartment or sleeping on the bare platform in an unconcerned manner was living according to his nature and not playing to the gallery. It may be remembered that even his earliest audiences included such varied crowds as Oriya coolies, railway strikers, Santals, and prostitutes. Nor were public addresses presented to him as

routine homage. At Comilla once the address recited, "Two per cent wear khadi; six per cent wear mill-khadi; twenty per cent half-khadi and half mill-khadi; two per cent spin regularly. . . ."—an accounting which other leaders might demand in similar cases. During his Harijan tour, throughout which he was an indefatigable auctioneer, he had time to correct the accounts of Harijan hostels. The earliest tours were tours of transformation which converted people to a new faith but even during later years neither the familiarity of his creed nor his advanced age weakened his interest in matters of relevant detail. Nor has any other political worker known the people of India as he did. He knew the Bengalis, Malayalis, Assamese, or Pathans as intimately as he knew the Gujaratis among whom he was born. All the leading workers were familiar to him; little known men were his friends. He had always time to see workers and attend to correspondence with a live touch. Always open to conviction, he did not disdain his opponents.

In democracy by debate, much of this may seem irrelevant, according to our constitutional codes. Gandhi was a useless or archaic politician by the test of May's Parliamentary Practice. But parliamentary democracy has not been worth much as far as the problem of poverty and human degradation is considered. Whether it is because the world has not been safe for democracy or democracy has not been safe for the world is irrelevant now. The standards of public work must be reviewed from time to time. Gladstone's England or Lincoln's America can be no model for us. The popularity of the Soviet Union with the down-trodden people of all countries is due to the self-reliance and security that the worker and the peasant feel and the lure of communism is largely due to the personal impact that the communist worker makes. Gandhi taught us that doctrinaire politicians or politicians who lose touch with the people are of no service and at best cause only confusion. His criticism of the latter-

day Congress worker was based on this growing segregation of the political worker from the people. That was why he was afraid of council entry and easy office acceptance. And the Congress worker, whose early idealism is now hardened into secluded squatting in comfortable office, knows, whether he is a minister or a parliamentary secretary, that he has lost the grace which Gandhi shed on him. The moral degradation among Congressmen apart, they are slowly becoming parliamentary automata and ceasing to be workers. Gandhi's method of contact and persistence is the only method that can save freedom for us and help us to shape democracy.

The problem of India is the problem of poverty and the degradation that goes with it. Yet how many of those who laid floral wreaths on Gandhi's bier were willing to admit this truth and act up to it! As we read the funeral eloquence of capitalists, landlords, the middle class Philistines, the funeral with which the whole world associated itself might be only like other funerals, a convenient occasion for ceremonial piety. For if those who sought to revere Gandhi after his death realized how much they had pained him during his lifetime, they would see the hypocrisy of insincere homage. The mood of penitence soon changed into exploitation of Gandhi's memory. The vested interests which sought to take refuge under his non-violence sought to take refuge under his name. Gandhi's life and death seemed vain as voluntary dispossession of vested interests did not follow the mood of shrift. As non-violent and voluntary liquidation of resistance to human liberation has been delayed, we have strayed from the field of Gandhi's humanism to the usual clangour of the political world. The ideologies of the market place have their price and their place. Unless reaction in every form melted, the proposed memorials to Gandhi were to be lies in our souls. No ideology had been more spectacular or so well conceived than Gandhi's though he invested it with no intellectual or schismatic clothing. But his life was a paean

of homage to the poor. They were the nation's first priority; that should have meant early liquidation of all vested interests. Without sufficient acknowledgement of this aim, reverence has become humbug.

VI

Gandhi's creed of non-violence has been traced to Jainism, Buddhism and the Sermon on the Mount. It was all these and an intensely individual faith which he applied successfully even to that tortuous form of practical affairs, politics, in South Africa, and on a larger scale in India. Our repeated dissent and repeated failure does not mean that non-violence is not the ideal of the world, an ideal which Gandhi unceasingly preached and practised. At Maritzburg he was unjustly ejected from a first class compartment; at Pardeburg he was brutally assaulted by a coach guard; at Durban his life was threatened by a whole mob; at Johannesburg he was beaten nearly to death by a Pathan follower; but he proved early that non-violence was the breath of his being, and had he survived the murderous assault of January 30, he would have forgiven his alleged assailant. To him the individual's morality was not different from the morality of groups and states. If violence is bad between individuals, it is bad between nations also and the purity of motive can never be a substitute for the purity of means. A quarter century of non-violent political experience has left Indians unconvinced of the invincibility of non-violence; some have accepted it as a necessity, not as a principle; many have accepted it haltingly; others have attributed to it as to British rule the emasculation of the nation. The ideal as preached and practised by Gandhi has to be properly understood, if we are not to divorce the core of his teaching from the rest of it. The continued violence of

thought and deed all round him left him unshaken in his faith to the last.

The non-violence of which Gandhi dreamed and wrote and talked so much and so often must be stripped of the caricature men have made of it. That non-violence has not been tried and it may be that as long as men are the men they are it can never be tried at crucial moments. He put the matter with scintillating clarity:

> "I do believe that where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence. Thus when my eldest son asked what he should have done had he been present when I was almost fatally assaulted in 1908, whether he should have run away and seen me killed or whether he should have used his physical force which he could and wanted to use, and defend me, I told him that it was his duty to defend me even by using violence. Hence it was that I took part in the Boer War, the so-called Zulu Rebellion and the (1914) war. Hence also do I advocate training in arms for those who believe in the method of violence. I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honour than that she should in a cowardly manner become or remain witness to her own dishonour.
>
> "But I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment. Forgiveness adorns a soldier. But abstinence is forgiveness only when there is the power to punish. It is meaningless when it pretends to proceed from a helpless creature. A mouse hardly forgives a cat when it allows itself to be torn to pieces by her."

There was no excuse for cowardice in Gandhi's view of life. The carnage of partition in which the majorities carried on their war of extermination against the minorities was no example of courage. There was little difference between the

violence of the brave and the non-violence of the brave. True, non-violence calls for the same qualities which are necessary for the violence of the brave. In a physical fight the qualities that are of utmost importance are moral, organization, discipline, unity, bravery and sacrifice. Satyagraha brought out these qualities and whether we were losing or gaining in strictly political terms we were progressively acquiring these qualities under Gandhi. It is plain that the Congress leadership did not always accept Gandhi's position. In 1934, after a period of fourteen years, he had to leave the Congress when the words "truthful and non-violent" were not substituted for the words "peaceful and legitimate" in the Congress creed of means. The next test came in 1938 when the Congress ministries were not able to apply his prescription of non-violence when disturbances broke out. With the war came another test and again the Congress leadership could not go with him and they said in effect:

> "We feel we could not accept your position with our mind and heart and soul, and we feel we should not entangle you. And if that is so, why should we accept an untenable position merely to retain your connection? It would be a fraud on ourselves and others."

But Gandhi, who always made a concession to human weakness, assumed the leadership again after the failure of the Cripps negotiations. The repeated rejection of Gandhi's test of non-violence means that the leadership and people could not live up to the ideal. We have not come to the position that the entire state can be organized on the basis of non-violence. But does it mean that we should give up the ideal? Limited application is still possible; absolute application may never be.

Gandhi had then a message to the world. William James had written as early as 1910 of the Moral Equivalent of War:

"So far war has been the only force that can discipline a whole community, and until an equivalent discipline is organized, I believe that war must have its way." Walter Lippmann wrote that "it is not sufficient to propose an equivalent for the military virtues. It is even more important to work out an equivalent for the military methods and objectives." Satyagraha provided the equivalent and there is no limit to its possibilities. If war debases, satyagraha ennobles, while accomplishing the same end. C. E. M. Joad acknowledged:

> "Gandhi is a moral genius and his method belongs to the coming generation. He has announced a method for the settlement of disputes which may not only supersede the method of force, but as man grows powerful in the art of destruction, must supersede it, if civilization is to survive."

Romain Rolland wrote:

> "Mr. Gandhi's satyagraha experiment is the sole chance now existing in the world of effecting transformation of humanity without violence. If this fails there will remain no other issue in human history but violence."

India has not been able to escape wars, but most Indians believe that war should be avoided and that there are moral equivalents to it.

VII

The world-wide homage paid to Gandhi was the homage to light, of the real to the ideal. The Negroes of West Africa, Frenchmen distraught over their affairs, the President of America, Hirohito, Indonesians, Arabs and many other contrasting peoples symbolize the miseries and hopes of mankind.

Few of them know intimately the mission of Gandhi, the environment in which he had worked; few of them agreed with his political philosophy or his social vision; but they all bowed to one whom they knew to be the Prince of Peace, the prophet of love who had preached and practised true non-violence in world affairs for a longer span of life than anybody else. For an unhappy world this wrung hope from despair. But it was not any new religion that Gandhi had founded. Like other great prophets he did not seek a new church: Buddha, Christ, Mohammad, Zoroaster and others were enough. But he retaught the truth of all religions, shaped a new concept of non-violence, extended it to every form of activity and abolished the gulf between religion and life, between state and papacy. If his ideals were practised there would be no confusion about God and Caesar.

The grandeur of this conception and the daring and excruciating experiments that went with it won the understanding of all religions and in the new Calvary of the new crucifixion the whole of mankind stood united as never before. After two world wars and with the prospect of another, the West was in a mood to understand it as much as the East. When Gandhi said that for him there was no politics devoid of religion, religion to him was no credal belief, no acceptance of personal God. While Hinduism was good enough for him, his attitude to other religions was one of positive appreciation. "It is not the Hindu religion which I certainly prize above all other religions," he once said, "but the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which ever purifies." "You cannot divide social, political and purely religious work into watertight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity," he said at another time equating religion with self-realization and humanism. And he did not merely pose these truths; he practised and proved them.

In this uncompromising earnestness and the final flaming sacrifice, all religions were seeing in him what they were apprehending for some time, the second Christ. In the Indian set-up in particular, this had been realized by all religions, though martyrdom alone might have helped understanding in some cases. The truth of the universality of all religions was Gandhi's contribution. He was early conversant with the scriptures of Christianity, Islam and Zoroastrianism. His achievement of understanding was a difficult process. The struggle for self-realization could be seen in his struggle to understand Christianity and the friendly debates he had had with Christian missionaries. The Sermon on the Mount went straight to his heart but he always discounted knowledge of religion as distinguished from experience. Tolstoy, Thoreau, Emerson and Ruskin deepened and humanized the quest. There was affinity between Christ's teaching and Gandhi's experience, and it seemed he had drawn upon the best Christian insight, the insight of Christian saints and sages. Gandhi's approach was impersonal, for he said: "I do not regard God as a person. . . . Truth for me is God." Gandhi was very near Christianity when the work of Christian missionaries led him to the realization of another truth: that every religion is good enough, that religions by themselves had never been bad and that the greatest need was for each one of us to rediscover them. The missionaries, who could understand this only as the brickwall of Hindu resistance to conversion, did not find it difficult later to realize the truth that true service sought no gain, that a Hindu, a Muslim or a Christian was better not through conversion but through rediscovery of the virtues of his religion. Nor was Gandhi's emphasis on the living Christ rather than on the Christ who died two centuries ago beyond Christian understanding. The Christian world had found in a Hindu a true follower of Christ.

Gandhi's proven love for the Muslims was a new starting

point of our national life. It was the beginning and end of all our secular and religious feeling, the Bible of the new state. There was never any doubt about this testament of love written in the blood of a long experience. The Koran, like the Bible, had been a part of his Gita. It was at the invitation of a Muslim merchant, Abdullah Sheth, that Gandhi first proceeded to South Africa and we have a touching record of Gandhi's earliest discussions of Islam with Abdullah. While understanding of comparative religion ripened, his fight for the rights of the Indian community was a fight for the rights of the Muslims who formed a large majority. On his return to India he became a friend of the Ali Brothers, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Abdul Bari, Dr. Ansari and others and leader of the Khilafat agitation. The Khilafat movement now seems a distant, forgotten battle with many critics but the opposition he braved made it an unforgettable chapter in our history. As Mohammed Ali acknowledged later, "that staunch Hindu, Mahatma Gandhi, went to jail for advocating the cause of Islam". There was no doubt that, as he stated in answer to Hindu criticism, Gandhi would have done the same thing again if a similar opportunity arose. But an opportunity never came till partition—after a long period of suspicion, doubt and vilification. He, who had been prepared to sign away blank cheques in favour of Muslims, lived to be later traduced as a narrow-minded Hindu seeking to establish Hindu domination. A trace of that bitterness was found in Jinnah's magnanimous tribute to Gandhi. But if he, after death, had been hailed as a leader of Hindus, he would have given the same reply as he did in August 1942:

> "The Qaide-Azam himself was at one time a Congressman. If today the Congress has incurred his wrath, it is because the canker of suspicion has entered his heart. May God bless him with long life, but when I am gone, he will realize and admit that I had no designs on the Muslims and

> that I had never betrayed their interests. Where is the escape for me if I injure their interests? My life is entirely at their disposal. They are free to put an end to it whenever they wish to do so. Assaults have been made on my life in the past but God has spared me till now and the assailants have repented for their action. But if someone were to kill me in the belief that he was getting rid of a rascal, he will kill not the real Gandhi but the one that appeared to him a rascal."

The real Gandhi was alive, for the Hindus, the Muslims, the Parsis, the Christians and the untouchables. The physical Gandhi was killed by a Hindu; the redeemer had to redeem the religion in which he was born. But the real Gandhi belonged to all religions and to all communities. The Muslims had felt he was their greatest friend before his death; after it, they mourned him most. The tributes from Pakistan were a spontaneous expression of a love that had joined hearts in the Khilafat days and might join them again. The Indian state was pledged to it. No state may seem to have been reared on the ideals of a man like Gandhi, but history need not always be repeated. If what had seemed a miracle two thousand years ago was witnessed again, there was hope that India might try to rise above the pattern of present standards and feel her way to a new life. India could prove that she was like no other country that had existed, that the land of Asoka and Gandhi was, indeed, different. If the ideal was followed with faith and determination, the country of Gandhi could become the country of God.

VIII

Gandhi insisted on work as much as he insisted on faith, and it was not possible even for those who rejected his faith to

reject his gospel of work. Not the least part of his attraction to political groups like the communists who did not share his basic philosophy was the example of unceasing work, work among the lowliest of the low, among labour and among peasants. And this attitude to work was creative, not means for gaining political advantage or concealing lack of a philosophy of life. The insistence on manual training was a way of emphasizing the close relation between one's intellectual convictions and bodily life. The constructive programme was the crystallization of this attitude to the basic problem of politics. And the importance of that programme could be realized when no political organization except the Congress had this occupational politics. In *The Gandhian Way* Acharya Kripalani pointed out the value of this programme even for political advance.

In a revolutionary fight the struggle is as much of importance as periods when struggle is not possible, when owing to political repression or exhaustion the nation is not prepared for the risks and sufferings the fight involves. At such times the nation must be provided with some activity of a constructive and useful character. If this is not done the fighting ranks will be disorganized. The soldiers of satyagraha must periodically retire to their camps. These must provide them with activities that would keep them fit and in good trim. Periods of comparative peace must be utilized also to strengthen the organization. There had to be a constructive programme. Khadi, village industry, village work, national education, Harijan work, Hindustani *prachar* were some of the activities which Gandhi organized and institutionalized. The activities were good in themselves and they kept the army of workers engaged. The nation too, by participating and helping in the activities, learnt habits of public work and responsibility. There were also local fights with the government as in Bardoli on particular issues. To view these activities as mere narrow social reform or reactionary was to

confuse the issues. All activity that was not of a militant character might appear as reformatory and not revolutionary. But if the aim and the objective are not forgotten, these activities become both reformatory and revolutionary.

Gandhi thus gave the Congress a permanent basis of work, preserving its usefulness and continuity, whether the Congress was passing through an agitational or constructive phase. The failure of other parties has been the lack of a constructive programme. It was from this point of view that Gandhi formulated his last advice to the Congress organization. If it was not to wither away as a mere parliamentary machine and was to pursue its true vocation, it could not give up the relevant parts of the constructive programme. The moment Congressmen ceased to be servants of the people and became well-paid legislators, they had no claim to pay homage to the man who had made them and the Congress. Even from the practical point of view, those who scoffed at spinning but who had not made any alternative fruitful had to remember that the All-India Spinners' Association covered no less than 15,110 villages and engaged 3,54,257 artisans. For the period of eighteen months ending June 30, 1942, the value of the khadi produced was Rs. 1,20,02,430, of khadi sold Rs. 1,49,84,513 and of wages distributed about Rs. 80 lakhs. During its eighteen years of existence till 1942, the A.I.S.A. had produced khadi of the value of Rs. 6,83,57,862, the value of the sales being Rs. 9,01,30,301 representing 60 per cent of the cost of production as against 22 per cent in the organized large textile industry. The principle of a living wage was adopted in 1935, notwithstanding the effect of such an increase on the selling price and tools and technique of production were improved. Similarly, the All-India Village Industries Association was of value in preserving and improving village industries. Considering the general apathy in the pre-freedom phase, these were not small results.

Economists and political workers have alternative methods

of production and distribution, and electricity or atomic energy provides a means for the utmost industrialization with decentralization, but success even in planned development depends on insistence on the basic principle of everybody's duty to work. The villages should not become the exploiting ground for experimentation. For those who thought that Gandhi wanted to deny modern amenities to villages, he said:

> "We have got to be ideal villagers, not the villagers with their queer ideas or absence of ideas, about sanitation and giving no thought to how they eat and what they eat. Let us not, like most of them, work anyhow, live anyhow. Let us show them the ideal diet. Let us not go by mere likes and dislikes but get at the root of those likes and dislikes. ... If we should have electricity in every village home, I should not mind villagers plying their implements and tools with the help of electricity. But then the village communities or the state would own power houses just as they have their village pastures.... The village movement is as much an education of the city people as of the villagers."

IX

Gandhi was a great journalist, not only because he was great in so many ways and his greatness was total but because he had a great journalist's gifts of expression and communication. Journalism is not scholarship; at its best, it is literature or history in a hurry; in part, it is action too. A journalist must have the capacity to understand, to react, to communicate, and Gandhi was for half a century the greatest one-man medium of mass communication. Whatever else he was, he was a journalist too.

Gandhi was the most fearless of journalists. His life was an epic struggle for freedom and equality, and though national freedom came in the last years of his life, he had been ceaselessly exercising his freedom before it came, fighting the many restrictions imposed by the British regime from time to time. He also led the fight for freedom of the press. For a man who knew no fear, this might seem natural, but he was also the most independent journalist possible, independent of the government, independent of business, independent of party. In his case there was no question of the usual external or internal pressures on the press.

Even a Gandhi must come to terms with industrial conditions, in the practice of journalism. No one can be a journalist without the help of a printing press, though the owner of a press is not necessarily a journalist. Gandhi was self-employed and had little need to compromise with commercial considerations. He sometimes owned the press where he produced the papers which he edited and as editor he always insisted on good management. He did not want to be connected with any paper that did not pay its way. But he would not print advertisements because they were not truthful and they amounted to an indirect tax on the reader, who had to pay for them as consumer of goods. He not only edited his papers but wrote for them incessantly. They were small papers, inevitably, weekly papers, but they were the greatest weekly papers that have ever been published.

In all of Gandhi's early struggles in South Africa, *Indian Opinion*, published on Sunday mornings, played its part. It was the main means of awakening among the Indians. Advertisements were accepted in the beginning and the press did job work, but Gandhi dispensed with these aids gradually and used the press and the paper to propagate his views. The subscription was raised, but the number of subscribers rose. Government circles read the paper closely to keep in touch with Gandhi's views. It was through *Indian Opinion* that

Gandhi arrived at the word "satyagraha". He found the phrase "passive resistance" inadequate for the kind of struggle he had in mind and he thought it shameful that an Indian struggle should be known by an English name. *Indian Opinion* announced a small prize to be awarded to the reader who invented the best name for the new struggle. Maganlal Gandhi suggested the word "sadagraha"—"firmness in good cause". Gandhi improved it to "satyagraha"—"the force which is born of truth and love or non-violence".

Young India was established in a more spacious atmosphere and had a far greater vogue. Like *Indian Opinion*, it was also ready for Gandhi to take over. In the very first issue of *Young India* Gandhi laid down the basic principles of his journalism. He confessed that editing a paper in English was no pleasure to him. He did it only for the sake of readers in the Madras Presidency. He liked to make his views on matters of general interest known to the government. But he did not need to control a newspaper merely for that purpose.

Young India was devoted more to constructive themes than to polemics, to Hindu-Muslim unity, improvements in the spinning wheel, the use of Indian languages, swadeshi, labour welfare and the use of Khadi.

Young India shared the vicissitudes of the nationalist struggle. In the 1930-31 movement, it began to appear in cyclostyle. It was after the Gandhi-Irwin Pact that it reappeared in print. But soon Gandhi had other ideas and he became preoccupied with the problem of abolition of untouchability.

In 1933, the first issue of *Harijan* weekly, priced one anna, appeared from Poona. It was published for and by the Servants of Untouchables Society and contained a poem by Tagore, "The Cleanser". Ten thousand copies were published. *Harijan* was not a name of Gandhi's coining. Some untouchable correspondents had suggested it. It was a journal dealing only with the cause of the outcastes; it eschewed politics. In

1935, it was made the organ of the All-India Village Industries Association also. It was a practical guide to village reconstruction.

When Vinoba led the anti-war satyagraha in 1940, the publication of *Harijan* was suspended, as Gandhi was against "rapid circulation" of the weekly. He did not want it to be a civil resistance organ. It was restarted after a time but it was not to be published in defiance of orders. At one stage, *Harijan* was published in English, Hindi (two places), Tamil, Telugu (two places), Oriya, Marathi, Gujarati, Kanarese (two places). Hindustani was used in Nagari and Urdu scripts. There were suggestions that the English edition should be stopped, but he would not think of it because, he said, "Englishmen, as well as Indian scholars of the English language, consider me to be a good writer in the English language".

But the "Quit India" movement meant a change. It was a "Do or Die" movement, and Gandhi did not want any newspaper to be published after the government imposed the severest possible restrictions on publication of news of the "Quit India" movement. After a lapse of three years and a half, *Harijan* was revived in February 1946. After Gandhi's death, an attempt was made to carry on with *Harijan* in his memory. There was a debate and a controversy among his followers whether it would be proper or necessary to carry on with it. *Harijan,* without him, might be a caricature. Financially, too, it might mean a loss. Every word had to be weighed. His memory would impose a great burden. *Harijan* finally closed.

Gandhi was a natural writer in Gujarati but he has a place as a writer in the English language. There was not only character but strength of personality in whatever he wrote. To read him was to learn how to use words correctly, with scrupulous regard for their exact meaning. He scorned ornamentation and avoided rhetorical devices. Yet, there was eloquence in all that he wrote, compelling clarity and

persuasiveness. There was something Biblical in the solemn, little sentences, and those grave words which breathed and burned and sang. He coined memorable phrases—"Satanic Government" and "leonine violence". There were memorable outbursts of lyrical, literary feeling as in his controversy with Tagore and in his indignant expostulations to the British. His obituary notices were finely phrased, neatly etched character sketches, moving epitaphs. He had the true journalist's sense of drama and even the headlines he gave his articles made history—"Disaffection A Virtue", "Tampering with Loyalty" and "Shaking the Manes", articles for which he was prosecuted. One of the greatest headlines of all times was "The Story of My Experiments with Truth".

Gandhi was not a professional writer and he did not compose consciously. Srinivasa Shastri, in a mischievous mood, pointed out to Gandhi's mistakes of grammar and wrong use of prepositions. Gandhi acknowledged his fallibility in this as in other matters with humility. Yet, in his best moments, he was a master of prose because he combined feeling with argument and matched his mood to the moment. He could write: "The cow is a poem on pity," "To the hungry, God appears in the shape of bread." There was grace in whatever he wrote; there was also masculinity. He could be as wise and simple as Solomon; he was as artless as Thoreau; always he had the power of kings and prophets.

X

With the passing of Gandhi, the old feeling of security was gone, not the false sense of security which the British regime had bred but the sense of security against the uncertainties and fears of freedom. The nation felt it was fatherless, unprotected by the moral law before which we had bowed. This feeling was strong in the case of all communities, and

was heightened in the case of the Government of India and of Jawaharlal Nehru. No single man could be heir to such a rich inheritance, but Jawaharlal Nehru inherited grave responsibilities. The times required courage and wisdom and Gandhi was gone. Jawaharlal Nehru recalled often, if the administration sustained itself through the grim ordeal of freedom, it was due to Gandhi's inspiration and guidance; he had stood like a rock of faith amidst the turmoil and doubt and confusion. Years ago, Jawaharlal Nehru had written:

> "Personality is an indefinable thing, a strange force that has power over the souls of men, and he (Gandhi) possesses this in ample measure and to all who come to him he appears in a different aspect. He attracted people but it was ultimately intellectual conviction that brought them to him and kept him there. Often they did not understand him. But the action that he proposed was something tangible which could be understood and appreciated intellectually . . . and in any event the road he was following was the right one thus far. . . ."

In the first days of freedom, there was not much difference between Gandhi's philosophy of life or Gandhi's action and the ideals of the state, and the better sense of the nation seemed to understand this harmony instinctively. The mood of sadness was also the mood of dedication.

The Government of India's two resolutions on Gandhi's death gave a new and resolute lead. Whatever might be our sorrow, we shall have to be strong, not weak. We must strive to achieve the ideal, not falter. The government called for courage, vision and faith, the pursuit of truth and the practice of tolerance. These were ideals, difficult to follow, particularly in those days of madness, but they were ideals which Gandhi had practised and taught us how to practise.

For the first time, perhaps, in the modern world the administration of a great country dedicated itself to put into practice the ideals of a leader not directly connected with the administration, repeating the example of Asoka. This was a pledge of earnestness.

As proof of that pledge, the government declared that there was no place for any organization preaching violence or communal hatred and that no such organization would be tolerated. No private armies would be permitted. The government called upon all citizens, and particularly those serving the government in any capacity, to abide by these standards of behaviour and to act strictly in accordance with the declared policy of the government. The warning was plain. To be specific, it was a warning to organizations, which had been thriving on Indo-Pakistan differences, the Punjab atrocities and the last intransigence of the Muslim League in India to wind themselves up. Gandhi's death hastened what had been inevitable. They were giving Hinduism a Nazi form and whatever its professional appearance there was something secret behind the parades. If progressive-minded people did not come out openly to condemn such organizations, it was with the idea of feeding them with publicity. But such caution was misplaced, whatever may be the strength of the organizations or the innocence of some of their members.

The government's declaration applied to members of the government. There could be no compromise on this issue, even if the Congress continued to agree to a composite government. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerjee had acted in the proper spirit in tendering his resignation. As a party to the government resolution, he could not continue to be a member of an organization, which would have to be wound up. It was proper for him to resign. That was not enough. Any member of the government who, while being no member of a communal organization, felt he could not but sympathize with such organizations had to go, if the people were to

believe that Gandhi's sacrifice had not been in vain. No government could fight the terrorism of communal madness with the faintest touch of self-reproach.

The government seemed stable and there was plenty of confidence in it but the conditions were not stable. We were unhinged between the past and the future. It was the duty of the leaders to push on with the work of framing the constitution of free India and promulgating it without delay. The uncertainty made people confuse genuine disaffection with fundamental dissent. The consciousness of a constitution would mean that, while there was room for expressing disaffection, there was no room for fundamental dissent to the existence of the state. It should not take more than a few months to touch up the constitution and not more than a few months further more to promulgate it. A constitution might not necessarily mean constitutionalism. It must be a worthwhile constitution, a broadbased, democratic and, if possible, socialist constitution. But the constitution of a vast country like India would have the merit of weight under which no sectional, provincial, religious or communal frenzies would have scope for political gangsterism. The chance of civil strife would be eliminated. Tempers would cool. Policies would emerge and programmes would be crystallized. Political crankism without programme or ideals would not thrive. Changes had to be made in the draft constitution to make it more liberal, but we wanted even the draft constitution with its drawbacks to be promulgated, with the hope of the democratic instincts of the people finding expression, rather than that the transition should be prolonged. Our greatest asset at a critical time was still our leadership. It had courage and vision and it seemed it would not fail for lack of integrity or resoluteness.

XI

The Gandhi National Memorial Fund had a slow growth and fortunately there were many second thoughts on memorials. What are memorials for? Was Gandhi to be commemorated in marble and stone? The Pharaohs were maniacs who built pyramids for their tombs, marvels of building but housing only the spirit of shrivelled mummies. Such architectural triumphs were not to be imitated. In some haste statues were erected which looked like a feeble caricature of the faith and form of Gandhi. Paintings were painful reminders of the degeneracy of that enfeebled art. The desire for memorials could become a desire to escape from the obligation of a living faith into a make-believe of memorials. Memorials commemorate, normally, forgetfulness. The Lincoln Memorial has not ended the woes of Negroes. The Statue of Liberty mocks at the graves of freedom. St. Paul's and St. Peter's are enduring fulfilment of human doubt. The Stratford Memorial and the Nelson Column being superficial in their allegiance have escaped from the sin of insincerity. In organizing a Gandhi National Memorial Fund, only the fringe of the problem of commemoration was touched. The nature of the memorial was important.

It was suggested that a new era and a new calendar should start, perhaps, to complete our chronological confusion. Indians should be called Gandhians, or Hinduism called Gandhism, as if christening could redeem our emergence into this world. Space in postage stamps and coins was offered for Gandhi's portrait to put him on a level with Samudragupta or George VI. Our dirty cities with their breed of dead souls should become Gandhinagars, or villages were to be named Gandhigrams. As if our Sankaracharyas were not enough some suggested a *Gandhi-peeth*. Rajghat must become a *punyatirtha*, because there we had reduced Gandhi to ashes and Birla House was to become Gandhi House as easily as

Petrograd had become Leningrad. Some suggested a bowl on the Jumna bank with the hoary banyan tree and other celebrated Indian trees along with equally tough trees to represent other countries, the Australian rose wood, the Canadian maple, the French poplar, the Iranian almond, so that the romantic might find one more rendezvous. Equally amusing was the suggestion that "Raghu Pati Raghava Raja Ram" should become the National Anthem, so that a Hindu state might be achieved at least in song and symbolists might explain the significance of Ram. Put his bust on the national flag, said one standard-bearer; a "Ram Dhun" pillar at Rajghat, suggested a prayerful heart. Less amusing were more intellectual attitudes like the suggestions for a Gandhi International with Einstein as president, for an International Peace Centre for contemplation and exchange of ideas, for a Gandhi Peace University, for renaming Mount Everest as Mount Gandhi, for a Gandhi Peace Prize. Equally ineffectual, though more fervent and gathering more and more support, was the suggestion sponsored by Mr. Amritlal Thakkar and others for pillars on the model of Asokan Pillars. Mr. Thakkar estimated the cost as Rs. 1 lakh for three pillars or Rs. 1 crore for 300 pillars. The suggestion as it had originally come from the South was for 100,000 pillars; others reduced the number to 500 pillars; still others might multiply the number to 600,000 pillars with all the villages in mind. The idea was carefully embellished in order to make the pillars as exquisite and lasting as possible. This could be a memorial only to our vanity. Pillars cannot fill the land with faith or bread. They cannot cover the entire land or the millions of hearts. The Asokan Pillar is of immense archaeological interest and has assisted history, but the times had changed and we were no longer afraid of moths, in the age of the atom bomb, to leave such costly footprints for posterity. Memorial builders had to remember one thing in considering any scheme—that the mid-twentieth century was not a period of architectural or sculptural glory

for India and any ambitious memorials we might deliberately leave behind might be only memorials to our decadence. The only two suggestions deserving practical application were that the memorials must take the forms of the causes which were dear to Gandhi and that every effort must be made to build an adequate museum for preserving Gandhi's writings.

What was Gandhi's own attitude to memorials? When a proposal to erect his statue was made, he wrote:

> "I must dissent emphatically from any proposal to spend any money on preparing a statue of me, especially at a time when people do not have enough food and clothing. In Bombay the Beautiful, insanitation reigns. There is so much overcrowding that poor people are packed like sardines. Wise use of ten lakhs of rupees will consist in its being spent on some public utility. That would be the best statue."

Gandhi stated with the same clarity his views on the best way of perpetuating the memory of departed great men. On Tilak's death, he said:

> "It is blasphemy to talk of such a man as dead. The permanent essence of him abides with us for ever. Let us erect for the Lokamanya of India an imperishable monument by weaving into our own lives his bravery, his simplicity, his wonderful industry and his love of his country."

The history of memorial funds sponsored and guided by Gandhi showed that he did not waste his effort on memorials in the popular sense. The Tilak Swaraj Fund, the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund, the Kamala Nehru Memorial Fund, the Kasturba Memorial Fund were all spent on institutions of service. It was not because Gandhi did not cherish the

memory of a Das or a Kamala Nehru. It was because he knew that memorials were inadequate even as a tribute of love. The question was: were we to keep him alive in our hearts or bury him under the deadweight of shining marble?

XII

The free state of India was settling down soberly to its tasks, but, in the absence of Gandhi in particular, it could ill afford to forget the fundamental values of life which he had preached and practised. Since his death the distance between him and the people increased and he was becoming a mere mocking voice of admonition. At Rajghat wreaths are still laid and sermons are still preached by Indian and foreign admirers. But the attitude is more holistic than historical. The tendency is to treat him as a low-priced textbook of ethics to be referred to at convenience. His message would seem easier to understand and more practicable if we kept it alive and if we remembered that he set up no code for saints but made many concessions to human weakness. The very idea of statehood was an unbearable burden for a free spirit like him, but, in spite of the agony that was caused to him, he understood that both the state of his immediate followers as well as the state of the multitudes could not sustain itself by incorporating the whole corpus of his teaching either with regard to truth or non-violence. The only possible effort was to see that the policy of the state was attuned to the essence of his teaching. He never approved of cowardice in the name of non-violence. Of the two significant clashes in which India was involved, he approved the action in Kashmir in self-defence and he was not alive at the time of the Hyderabad operations. But in these acts of self-defence and not acts of arrogant strength, India could be held to have not strayed from the essence of his teachings.

In these days of quick irritation and war-mongering talk, as far as application of physical strength is concerned, there should be the forbearance and generosity that Gandhi taught us. In other matters, it is a tale of repudiation.

The saddest part has been the fall in character which has been more responsible for the impression of disillusionment than inadequacy of policy. The major share of the blame is that of the Congress both as an organization and as a collection of political and social workers. Corruption would not seem as unredeemable as it is if Congressmen at least bore the imprint of Gandhi's character as they had borne the brunt of the suffering he prescribed for them. The common man whose welfare was always Gandhi's objective has been forgotten. Had Gandhi been living, there would have been at least much less of gubernatorial pomp and ministerial humbug. In other ways the liberation of the human spirit for which Gandhi strove so much has been caricatured into a retreat to revivalism. The allegorical conception of Ram Rajya has become a movement for a literal transcription of ancient formalities and the spirit of reform seems to be a dead letter. The Spartan simplicity and the magnificence of the Athenian intellect which were models have been displaced by the standards of the black market.

If Gandhi were alive today, he would be nearly hundred years old and would find that he was near godhood. The world has not changed much since his death, and people talk of him as if he were as remote as saints in calendars. He has lent himself to caricature not only in appearance. Congressmen use him as their talisman without practising either truthfulness or a sense of non-possession to which he attached great value. Opposition parties use Gandhi to criticize Congressmen. Conservative parties twist his theory of trusteeship and use it to support the principle of predatory self-interest. The consequences of Gandhi are yet to be critically assessed and given a historical perspective. The devotion

which he evoked and the mass discipline which he inspired led to an unintellectual atmosphere. Many ceased to think; they lost the habit of thinking for themselves. In invoking the forces of freedom, he invoked much that was good and much that was bad. His direct action has been imitated in many crude forms of direct action; his satyagraha has been carricatured into all kinds of hunger strikes. His influence on Indian national evolution will require study. He is a submerged part of the national consciousness, as broad as the nation, and all the good and the bad go with it.

The Disciple

I

THERE WAS NO ONE WHO COULD PAY AN adequate tribute to Jawaharlal Nehru, when he died, the kind of tribute, moving and truthful and memorable, which he paid to men of history and to his great contemporaries; and he was, like Gandhi, his own best commentator and no comment could add anything to what he said. There have been other great men in Indian history, even in this century, other men more intellectual, more spiritual, more courageous, or more energetic, and he commemorated them all. But for nobility of nature, for modernity of outlook, for a combination of physical and mental endurance, for harmonizing the temper of science with the spirit of art, for chivalry and humanity, for consistency of vision, he was the greatest of them all. It was the combination of many qualities in such a degree that made him the finest possible instrument of historical forces.

Nehru was the stoutest fighter of this age in the liberation war of humanity. There have been others who have worked for peace as ardently and even more effectively, with the strength of state power behind them, but beside other world leaders, his vision seemed larger, his utterance bolder, his sense of history surer, and his faith in man's future more fervent and abiding. There was no trace of pettiness in the historical or personal sense in his make-up. He drew upon the inexhaustible reserves of history, the ageless traditions of

India, Asoka, Gandhi, and the rest, and from the moment of freedom, he saw clearly that there could be no progress without peace and where India's course lay. He showed brilliance in his grand design of foreign policy, which even deviation from principle by those who had not his clarity of vision could not distort. For Nehru, there was no doubt that India's freedom must lead to the freedom of the rest of Asia and of Africa, and it was more freedom of the mind which knows no frontiers than mere physical freedom. No one was more easily at home among Englishmen or Russians or Indonesians or Chinese, and could step out more easily from the present into the future and give a touch of history to anything that he did or a touch of literature to anything that he said or wrote.

Nehru's services to the making of modern India makes him our greatest nation builder, the founder of our secularism, our socialism, and our democracy. He could not have built so enduringly but for certitude of faith and a high sense of destiny. From the beginning he invested the freedom movement with a historical sense and established the interdependence of national security and the international situation. He left a lasting impression on India's social and economic process and pushed them on to the climax of a revolution. He established firmly the planning processes and the foundations of parliamentary democracy. He promoted the scientific temper and worked unceasingly for the industrial revolution. This is history, whatever may happen to parties or individuals. He was our greatest parliamentarian and he showed unfailing respect for parliament. He set standards which will be the guiding book for generations and he has inculcated a sense of true values. In all this ceaseless work, he never quarrelled with his tools. In other situations, he would have been someone else; in the situation in which he found himself, he had no need to be anybody else: he was Nehru.

Even in death, he looked a Caesar, with that look of majesty and profile of distinction, a civilized, compassionate Caesar, imperious in his moods but a democrat working by parliamentary methods. He was a man of introspection, who presented vignettes of reflective charm, but he was a man of decision when the moment for decision came. His source of strength was not state power; for the prime minister of a big country, he had no armaments and armadas behind him; his power came from the four hundred and sixty million people. He loved them dearly and they loved him, and there is no parallel in history to the mass contact he established as a one-man medium of mass communication; it made him the greatest educator possible, admonishing, explaining, expounding. He did not like slogans and he avoided jargon, in his speech as in his writing. His moods changed as their moods changed; he reflected their urges and shaped them into policies. He gave meaning to our nationhood by emphasizing its compositeness and for the minorities he was the ark of security. It was only inner strength, compact of spiritual and physical strength and self-knowledge and self-mastery as great as Gandhi's, which gave him that power of appeal. He did not know fear; his proud, brave spirit never flinched from any problem. He had high ambition for his country and he always dreamed of its destiny. Pettiness stood rebuked in his presence. He scorned superstition.

For seventeen years, he had no respite, he asked for no quarter, his vision never faltered, and his freshness and youthful spirit never failed, and this record is unequalled in the history of democracy. He was always growing, responding to needs; even at sixty or seventy, he was a man of promise opening new prospects. Nehru was greater than the prime minister, greater than anything else he was, and he is with Gandhi above party, above controversy, a part of the great heritage of India. No one could give so unsparingly and deal with so many problems always; he knew he was

not immortal, and though he hoped to give more of himself to the service of the nation, he knew the people would have to carry on some day without him.

There was Nehru the man, apart from what he meant to the people, and he was many men in one. Few great leaders have combined such high seriousness and a sense of purpose with such a spirit of adventure. Sometimes he proclaimed himself a pagan. Free from the bonds of sect, schism, religion, and caste, believing in the God of man and not of religion, he was a pagan who found delight and inspiration in nature and whose spirit was one with the woods and birds and springs. He was no self-conscious artist who practised poetry or cultivated style; his art sprang from his pagan heart and the abundance of its feeling, combined with an acute intelligence and a brave spirit; his style was the style of a free spirit nursed in the rhythms of nature, the style of a man of action who was also a man of thought. He was many-sided, a lover of sport, a rider, a glider, a gardener, a man who could travel endlessly and work for hours without respite, a scientist, a writer who had priceless moments of self-revelation and made them read like testaments, and a humanist, whose sympathies were spontaneous and never lacked expression. He combined intellect, imagination, and character. He had his moments of torment and self-inquest; he had his inner conflicts; and then he too was a transfigured man.

II

The world looked different without Jawaharlal Nehru and India looked vastly different, but, in its moment of unutterable grief, the nation showed a great sense of restraint and of discipline and was looking to the future. This is what he had wished, and he would have considered all his labour lost, if the people had shown the least sense of panic. That would

have been a poor tribute to the progress they had made and the vision that he tried to impart to them. The signs of maturity which the people showed was a measure of his achievement. The unity and sense of integrity which he worked for were expressed in an impressive degree by people belonging to all parties and all sections of the nation, and if this national solidarity was maintained, democracy seemed safe in the country. The first task, as the government and parliament realized, was to reaffirm the principles which Nehru had laid down for generations to come, and whatever policies emerge according to needs, the principles held good and the standards which he had set and the values which he had established had to be followed with firmness and loyalty. There is a continuity about the traditions of India, a sense of self-possession about her, an inner vitality and strength which he deepened, and there could be no greater tribute to a leader than that he is not only mourned and remembered but followed. From a nation's grief could grow a nation's strength. The spirit of rededication displayed by all must have impressed on the representatives of foreign countries who attended the funeral and spoke at the memorial meeting that India would continue to play her part in the way Nehru wanted her to play it.

Such a combination of qualities is rare in history: such opportunities and achievements do not recur easily. He was often urged to nominate his successor, and he rightly refused because he understood better what the problem was. He himself was no nominated heir, as some people thoughtlessly supposed. He had to fight strenuous battles within the Congress and without, in Gandhi's time and after, and in the end succeeded in impressing his vision and his personality on the people, often following Gandhi, often differing from him, always imbibing and upholding the universal in him. Nobody could succeed Nehru, in the larger sense: nobody could hope even to be a copy of him. He himself would have

wished for no carbon copies. Among Gandhi's close associates and followers, he was original, an associate and a follower but always his own brave and impetuous self. The succession concerned the prime ministership, and it was one part of Nehru. The Congress leadership was aware of its responsibility in choosing a successor to the prime minister. He could not be a mere party leader, thought he had to be one; he had also to appeal to the minds and hearts of the people, in the conditions of this country, possess a public image, as unsullied and vivid as possible. Even this part of the succession was difficult, and the choice had to be carefully made. Anyone could only prayerfully hope to be adequate.

The broad policies were firmly established and no successor or future government, even if it did not have Nehru's sense of history, could disregard them. The people had been educated ceaselessly by Nehru and, whatever the aberrations among some sections of them, they would not allow the ideals of secularism, socialism, and democracy to be forgotten. Secularism is not repudiation of religion but transcending of it and a synthesis of the many cultural strains in our composite culture with its tradition of tolerance. Communal harmony is a vital part of it. Nehru was really the founder of Indian socialism; it was no imposed creed for him; it was inevitable in the conditions of the country and in the evolution of the world, and he wanted it to be a broad open movement, not a matter of sects and intrigues. No socialism or anything else could escape the democratic process in this country. As long as the Congress continued to be in office, it must carry forward these policies, and it is doubtful if any other party can follow different policies. But Nehru imparted to secularism, socialism and democracy the compassionate spirit of humanism. He had his moments of anger, but his vision was unclouded, and his freedom from passion and prejudice gave him the clarity that shone brilliantly at all times. The nation had to learn to work with this calm,

unprejudiced outlook and from confidence and self-possession, especially in dealing with the rest of the world. The policy of peace at home and peace abroad, of collective security, of friendship and co-operation with all countries, needed no variation, in spite of what had happened. The country had to think of defence as it thought of development, but it would also work for settlement of its disputes with its neighbours on honourable terms. The danger was that, with the withdrawal of an outstanding leader, values would be forgotten, standards lowered, and decency compromised.

III

Nehru was the product of the Indian Renaissance and the product of the Indian Revolution, to which he was to give shape and content. He was a product of the Gandhi era of that revolution, different from Gandhi and with his own individuality, though a part of it. The relations between Gandhi and Nehru will always be of interest, for his place in history is by the side of Gandhi and the world paid him the kind of homage which it had only paid to Gandhi in 1948. Yet how far was he with Gandhi and how far was he himself? Gandhi's other associates who, touched by his spirit, rose to high stature were conformists, though each had his own individuality; Nehru alone could be called a non-conformist and he often differed from him, fought with him, yet followed him loyally. He was a rebel, an extremist before he had met Gandhi, and a man of embattled spirit eager for action. He was not a man of religion, though he was later to achieve insight and wisdom which made him a sage as much as a statesman; he demanded action, and Gandhi was the only leader who had a plan of action that suited the genius of the Indian people and matched the might of the British regime.

Motilal Nehru was slowly drifting on to Gandhi, after a

moderate phase, partly under the influence of his son, and Jawaharlal Nehru first met Gandhi about the time of the Lucknow Congress during Christmas in 1916. Gandhi was then a hero, not yet submerged under the mystic reverence he was to evoke as a Mahatma; he had put up a heroic fight in South Africa, and soon his successful fight in Champaran impressed the people, who were awakening to the grandeur of his leadership, and Nehru was one of them. His vague socialist ideas of college days receded and he was a nationalist and a patriot. Personality is an indefinable thing, said Jawaharlal Nehru, a strange force that had power over the souls of men, and Gandhi seemed to possess this in ample measure and to all who went to him he often appeared in a different aspect. Yet Nehru was not at all the man even then to succumb to personality, however great, without intellectual conviction. He did not agree with Gandhi's philosophy of life and even with many of his ideals; often like others, he did not understand Gandhi fully for several years. But Gandhi attracted him because the action he proposed was tangible which could be understood and appreciated intellectually. Nehru thought that any action was welcome after the long tradition of inaction, and though it seemed to him action could not be divorced from thought, Gandhi convinced him, step by step, of the rightness of the action he proposed, and Nehru went with him. He hoped vaguely that Gandhi, being a man of action and very sensitive to changing conditions, would advance along the line that seemed to him right. And from the early satyagraha campaigns to the Dandi March and then to the convulsive "Quit India" movement he seemed to be going along the right road.

For Nehru, as for others, the dominant passion was to get rid of subjection to foreign rule, to achieve freedom, and to give social and economic content to that freedom. They were rebels and revolutionaries first. There were grave differences between Gandhi and Nehru and others on the

attitude to war, and there were fundamental differences on issues like non-violence, resistance to the Japanese invasion, and the duty of a free India towards resisting, violently, the forces of Nazism and Fascism. Gandhi's outlook on the world was supplemented by Nehru's knowledge of the world and the forces that were shaping it. But when the British Government was not ready to part with power, there was unity on the "Quit India" movement, though till the last moment, few understood the basis of that movement. Again, action seemed best, and freedom came because of this ardent quest for action. There were other differences too, as on industrialization, and Nehru expressed his views frankly in Gandhi's lifetime. In two of the greatest autobiographies of all time, Gandhi and Nehru express themselves fully and with exquisite passion and they stand self-explained, so similar, yet so different. These classics of history and self-revelation do not need annotation. The Indian Revolution carries the impress of these two men of history, men of action and men of thought, and, like all great revolutions, it is leaving its impress on the world.

IV

As a mass organization waging campaign after campaign of satyagraha for freedom, the Congress was Gandhi's Congress. As the organization of a party in power throughout the country for nearly seventeen years, it was Nehru's Congress. Though Gandhi dominated it from at least 1920 till the time of his death, Nehru began to influence it from 1929, when he presided at Lahore over the Congress session which declared for independence. Neither Gandhi nor Nehru dominated it without facing opposition. From the beginning of Gandhi's ascendancy, though the people were overcome by the mystique of his mahatmaship, there was opposition to his civil

disobedience movements, to his readiness to call them off whenever he found they led to spasms of violence, and to his programme of boycotting the legislatures. Das, Motilal Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad, Dr. Ansari and others did not agree with his philosophy or his programme from time to time. At the Belgaum Congress, the Swarajists, non-changers, moderates and extremists came together, and then Gandhi withdrew himself and devoted himself to his constructive programme. Yet Gandhi was the inspiring force, the spirit and substance of the Congress, and Jawaharlal Nehru, though disagreeing with his philosophy, was with him. After all their speech-making, token cuts, adjournment motions, and voting out of budgets, the Swarajists found that the parliamentary game without transfer of power was a burlesque, and again it was Gandhi who had a programme of action. The Salt Satyagraha followed; after triumph, truce, and defeat, Gandhi again occupied himself with abolition of untouchability, Harijan welfare, village industries, and other parts of the constructive programme which he devised for his army of jail-goers. The war came and again Gandhi led non-co-operation with the war effort which the British imposed on an unwilling, subject India, without whose freedom and consent they acted. The last phase was the most glorious. The "Quit India" movement, with all its startling developments, its emotional sweep, its confusion and recklessness was the climax of Gandhi's campaign. The I.N.A. revolt and the R.I.N. mutiny followed; Britain realized she would no longer be able to rule India. And freedom came.

Freedom brought with it the pains of partition. The Congress could have fought British imperialism or the Muslim League, but could not fight both, and no concession was acceptable to Jinnah. Gandhi was not reconciled to partition but he did not want to stand in the way of freedom, and the Congress accepted partition as secession of unwilling parts of the country consisting of Muslim majority areas; leaving

millions of Muslims as citizens of India. Pakistan, as it emerged, was not what Jinnah had wanted it to be; and it led to a travail of bloodshed, redeemed on India's side by Gandhi's martyrdom and Nehru's feats of daring in the blooded streets of Delhi. As Congress President at the time, he became vice-president in the interim government and later prime minister. But the Congress was not yet a malleable instrument in his hands; if it had been, he would have, in spite of the terrifying problems of refugee rehabilitation, states integration in which Sardar Patel showed a non-violent Bismarck's tact and genius, and constitution-making, launched on immediate socialist transformation. The moment of creation had to be missed because the problems of partition were too overwhelming and the Congress was under the influence of conservative forces. Nehru could not keep the Congress Socialists in the Congress and they did not have the patience to face facts or the vision to see the future; he had to let them go, and by the way they got lost in the wilderness, it is clear he was right in putting his faith in the Congress and they were wrong in losing it.

Nehru had to make sure that the Congress, apart from mechanically discharging its responsibilities as the ruling party, was responsive to his creative touch. The first big clash came when Purushottamdas Tandon nominated a Working Committee which was not a willing instrument of socialism. The nature of the crisis was misunderstood widely and Tandon, an old comrade for whom Nehru had the highest regard, misunderstood it most. It was interpreted as Nehru's desire, as prime minister, to dominate the Congress; Nehru's desire was to shape the Congress and make it a socialist Congress. He issued no threats and carried no open or secret campaigns; in the spirit of Gandhi, he withdrew himself, resigning from the Working Committee, and declaring at a press conference that, if the Working Committee desired, he would resign from prime ministership. There was

an open rebellion in some quarters, especially in U.P. where he had fought many battles and in Madhya Pradesh, charging him with dictatorial tendencies. It did not take long for the crisis to end; Congressmen and Congress leaders acted one by one. Tandon had to resign, and Nehru became Congress President for the fifth time. After fighting the first general election in 1952, with his matchless energy, he passed on his mantle of presidentship to Mr. Dhebar. At Avadi, the Congress adopted socialism; planning started, and the Second Plan laid the foundation of socialist planning. Mr. Dhebar, in session after session, spoke in the accents of Nehru, and whatever the local wrangles, after 1950 it was Nehru's Congress as it never had been anyone else's, and it was a Congress committed to socialism.

Nehru was not a nominated heir of anyone, though Gandhi, with his prophetic insight, saw him as his true successor because of his qualities of bravery, honesty, chivalry, and truthfulness, in spite of their differences. There was always opposition to Nehru's ideas and he had to fight his way. There were differences in ideas and of temperament with Subhas Chandra Bose, and the way Nehru dealt with them did him great credit. He had his differences in ideas and of temperament with Sardar Patel, a formidable figure by any standards, but they saw they complemented each other and achieved co-operation. There was opposition from other men, resignations from the cabinet by Dr. Mathai, Dr. Ambedkar, Mr. Deshmukh and others in challenging circumstances, but they were not Congress challenges. Socialists blamed him for not leaving the Congress and leading them, but he always held the Congress to be a mighty instrument of historical forces and to leave it would be to give up that instrument. He used that instrument, willingly and knowingly, for great purposes, led it to victories in three general elections as one of the greatest campaigners in the history of democracy, helped it to hold the country

together, and left it a still mighty instrument.

The charge that Nehru was seeking to become a dictator sounded strange. But the charge was worth examination. For Caesarism in the Congress or the country would be bad. The strangest part of this, however, was that Nehru himself would have been the first to join in the hunt for Caesarism. For those interested in his ideas about it, his self-portrait which he had written anonymously several years ago was interesting reading:

> "Jawaharlal cannot become a fascist. And yet he has all the makings of a dictator in him—vast popularity, a strong will directed to a well-defined purpose, energy, pride, organizational capacity, ability, hardness, and with all his love of the crowd an intolerance of others and a certain contempt for the weak and inefficient.... In normal times he would just be an efficient and successful executive but in this revolutionary epoch, Caesarism is always at the door, and is it not possible that Jawaharlal might fancy himself as Caesar? .... He cannot rest, for he who rides a tiger cannot dismount. But we can at least prevent him from going astray and from mental deterioration under too heavy burdens and responsibilities. We have a right to expect good work from him in the future. Let us not spoil that and spoil him by too much adulation and praise. His conceit, if any, is already formidable. It must be checked. We want no Caesars."

This remarkable self-analysis was itself not enough as a safeguard against Caesarism and Nehru was ready to agree about that too. But it seems he had anticipated his critics.

On the issue of democracy versus dictatorship, it was difficult to see how Mr. Mahtab's suggestion or anybody else's suggestion that Nehru might at least temporarily take over Congress Presidentship or that the Working

Committee be reconstituted meant installing a dictatorship. Let alone an individual's dictatorship, even party dictatorship would not be acceptable to the people, and there were other parties, besides the millions, who would rise in revolt against any dictatorship. The Constitution, with its intricate devices and checks and balances, was not the seed bed of dictatorship, unless a remarkable transformation took place, and Nehru's answers and speeches in parliament did not indicate that he did not want to play the parliamentary game. Dictatorship would mean that Nehru would march the armed forces up and down the country as he liked, dismiss a chief minister here or there, or get recalcitrant men shot. Nobody could imagine such startling things, except those who murdered Gandhi or harboured secret thoughts against Nehru. Nor was there anything but malice and peevishness in unnecessary comparisons between Gandhi, who had chosen Nehru as his political heir, and Nehru, who always acknowledged Gandhi as his master. By being prime minister, Nehru had not forfeited his magnanimity of mind and temper or his intellectual honesty which endeared him to Gandhi and the masses. That position remained and it also could be said that the Congress outlook and heritage were, next to Gandhi's, largely of his making. Thereby nobody wanted to make him a dictator; nor did anybody want to free Congress governments from Congress mandates. What was sought was to make the organization work smoothly, without unnecessary frictions and inner sabotage. Mr. Mahtab's suggestion was for a new arrangement, so also was Nehru's suggestion, though these suggestions produced strange reactions in quarters which had not promoted democracy. It was open to the Congress to reject these suggestions but those who seemed to support the Congress President, Tandon, and his Working Committee and other committees as triumphs of democracy, were not supporting democratic processes but farming of power.

While the critics may have done some service, by coming out into the open and sharpening the conflict, they employed the questionable method of canvassing the A.I.C.C. before it had the issue before it. Thereby they betrayed themselves again, for they seemed to think that the A.I.C.C. was with them, forgetting that there were other factors, tangible and intangible, besides the A.I.C.C. and behind them all there was the Congress itself. Manoeuvring through committees had become an easy process for some and an easy escape from the people and this method was a triumph of the constitutional process. But it was sought to be made so, again denying the vitality of the organization, and in the process, the critics had traduced, for a vote of confidence which Nehru did not seek, the members of parliament, who were not so indirectly representative and who at any rate had made a constitution and had been making laws for millions of men. Behind the critics were also ranged communalism, capitalism and stark reaction. If the issue was between what Nehru represented and what his critics represented, it was an easy issue. The Congress must choose, asserting that it was greater than Nehru and that the country was greater than it. But by dragging Sardar Patel in support of Tandon, the critics had again made the controversy much wider than it need have been, knowing that Nehru could not descend to that level of controversy and that it provided profitable stock-taking for grave diggers.

V

Nehru had gone through the Fabian phase as a student at Cambridge ; later his study of history and scientific attitude led him to Marxism. The Russian Revolution affected him deeply and in the division of the world his sympathies were on the communist side. The violence of the capitalist

order was permanent, while the violence of communism seemed temporary.

> "Russia apart, [he said] the theory and philosophy of Marxism lighted up many a dark corner of my mind. History came to have a new meaning for me. The Marxist interpretation threw a flood of light on it, and it became an unfolding drama with some order and purpose, howsoever unconscious, behind it. It was the essential freedom from dogma and the scientific outlook of Marxism that appealed to me."

But Marxism-Leninism was different in practice and the Indian background also affected him greatly. It was essentially a peasant India with a growing industrial proletariat. In Uttar Pradesh especially, feudalism was the dominant evil, and he was a peasant agitator in a situation which called for an agrarian revolution. All this meant a changing of the social order and to Nehru nationalism was a narrow creed. The U. P. Congress Committee, under his inspiration in 1929, made suggestions to the A.I.C.C. on socialist reconstruction. Towards the close of the year, Nehru was both President of the Congress and President of the All-India Trade Union Congress. Under his inspiration, the momentum towards socialist reconstruction grew in the Congress, and at Karachi, in 1931, the resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic Policy was passed, saying among other things that "the state shall own or control key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport".

To Nehru, this was something but not socialism, for a capitalist state could easily accept whatever was contained in that resolution. He did not join the Congress Socialist Party, which was to work for secularism within the Congress and in which many of the present communists started their

career, but he was its inspiration. Fascism was rising in Europe, and he said that there was no middle road between fascism and communism, and if one had to choose, he chose the communist ideal, though he did not agree with the orthodox methods of communism. When he was elected Congress President in 1936, for the Lucknow session, he startled everyone by including three of the Congress Socialist leaders in the Working Committee. There was a conflict at that time between Gandhi's socialism, ethical in its approach, and Nehru's scientific socialism. The two approaches were to achieve some approximation later, but the bulk of the Congress leadership at that time did not share Nehru's enthusiasm for socialism, when he carried on a raging campaign for it, driving the big capitalists into opposition to him. Gandhi still believed in effecting social and even economic change through change of heart, while Nehru was convinced that socialism could come about only through objective factors. That was why he accepted the chairmanship of the National Planning Committee with enthusiasm and worked for clear political and economic ends. Planning fascinated him and engaged his constructive genius, but there was no co-operation from the authorities and there could be no planning for socialism without state power. And then other problems occupied him, the ministries in the states, the freedom struggle, and the war situation, in which he gave forceful shape to Congress opposition to the forces of fascism.

All along, he was working his way towards socialism for Indian conditions. As a Marxist, he accepted monism and dialectics, but Marxism did not satisfy him completely. After Marx, there were many developments, especially the rapid growth of technology and as a historian, he could not ignore history. While the Russian Revolution or any other revolution could not be duplicated, a living philosophy, he thought, must answer the problems of the day, and Indian socialism had to be Indian. It was planning, as the most practical aspect

of socialism, that helped him to educate the Congress and the country in socialism. It was not easy, though he was a ceaseless propagandist and always looked for opportunities for practical action. He led step by step, from Avadi to Jaipur and to Bhuvaneswar, on the political plane, and from one plan to another.

What is the essence of democratic socialism for India, as Nehru has established it? It is not enough to divide the existing wealth; the Indian crisis is essentially a crisis of production. It involves an industrial revolution and it is no use nationalizing old machinery when heavy state investment in gigantic modern projects is necessary. Planned development is essential and planning in Indian conditions has to be socialist planning and democratic planning. There is no room for dogma or sectarianism; socialist transformation is to be an open, democratic process. While state action and legislation are necessary, socialism means educating and preparing the people for it. The means are important but the ends should not be forgotten. It is a modern, technological revolution, which works for classlessness, without ignoring class conflicts, a dynamic and ceaseless process of change from present into the future. All this must work for order and India must work for peace at home and peace abroad. This has been an exciting prospect for India.

VI

Nehru was a democrat for a long time before he took to the practice of parliamentary democracy. He watched the burlesque of the council entry programme of his father and others with amusement and indifference; he was an agitator, one of those who were called no-changers. He could not think of democracy without transfer of power and the sensation of real self-government. To him the people's free-

dom came first, freedom to shape their future as they liked, and they were not an abstraction. He thought of them as millions and millions of individuals, each with his individuality, each master of his fate, and not in mass or as groups. His interest in civil liberties and the many battles he fought for them, apart from his participation in the freedom fight, was a part of his passion for individual liberty, as a condition of national freedom. He did not like the British professions of paternalism and he intensely disliked dictators. About Hitler and Mussolini, he had no illusions, even when many intellectuals were fascinated by their dazzling conquests of power. Napoleon Bonaparte was a schoolboy hero, but as he learnt more of Napoleon, he developed a distrust of any kind of Bonapartism. He enjoyed the sensation of power which he derived from the appeal to the mass mind which he achieved, but he was a democrat who was always prepared to take his chance in the inner party struggles of the Congress.

He was the first to give articulation to the idea of a Constituent Assembly long before under the Cabinet Mission scheme a Constituent Assembly was set up. A Constituent Assembly had for him the implications of a revolution, and in spite of the limitations under which the Constituent Assembly was announced and the intransigence of the Muslim League, he sought to endow it with freedom which was not yet in sight; he sought to make it the instrument of revolution.

If Motilal Nehru was the greatest leader of opposition this country has known, Jawaharlal Nehru is the greatest leader of the house this country will have known for a long time. It was an amazing transformation. He had had no experience of legislative work and he had been accustomed to speak to large numbers of people in open spaces. It seemed his style had been shaped for appeal, exhortation or excitement, but from the very moment of his parliamentary career, he adapted himself to the new environment and the new

opportunities. His speech on the Objectives Resolution was one of the great speeches of all time ; it dealt with a spacious theme spaciously and was addressed to an audience of constitution makers. It required imagination and intellectual ability of a high order to grasp the new situation and understand the technique of presentation in a deliberative assembly.

This process was developed further from time to time, and from moods, grave and gay, he showed himself to be the complete parliamentarian. There was often the complaint that he was discursive and that he was a professor and a historian, but he always spoke to purpose and never missed making his point. He made many great speeches and helped maintain as high a level of debate as possible. He had always to be listened to with respect not only because of what he said but because, apart from his faultless accent, of the manner of his saying it. The secret of his success was that he showed unfailing respect for parliament, discouraged frivolity or incompetence among his colleagues, and while indulging in grave or sometimes puckish humour, was always considerate, reasonable, and ready to admit mistakes. There was no evasiveness about his answers even to supplementaries from the least important members. He was also regular and punctual in his appearances and the first seat on the front bench will never see his like again.

Nehru treated parliament with such deference and respect, as he would have treated any legislature, because he believed in the virtues of parliamentary democracy, in the value of good precedents, and in the formulation and implementation of policies with the consent of the people or their representatives. The parliamentary system did not start with independence; from the time of the Minto-Morley Councils, there had been some training in legislative work. But this time it was the legislatures of a free India that were at work ; they had heavy responsibilities and immense powers, apart from many privileges. They had to serve the people's needs and

show great strides in progress or discredit themselves. It was not easy, for with vast reserves of illiteracy the country had started with adult suffrage. To Nehru, there was no other way. It was with this great handicap that he made three general elections an impressive demonstration of the working of the world's largest democracy.

Any democracy, any government by deliberation, means the capacity to debate, and he taught this lesson ceaselessly. It must give good government and help criticism and correction; it means balances and checks. At no time did Nehru use his majority as a brute majority; he was sensitive to the moods of the opposition. The end of parliamentary democracy was the good of the people; he did not like its delays and complicated procedures, and he was impatient for measures. Any democracy of the twentieth century must also mean economic democracy and, as he had once held capitalism to be inconsistent with democracy, he came to equate democracy with socialism. Parliamentary democracy requires some conditions and among them are tolerance and equable temper. He insisted on them, and wanted stable parties with a high sense of responsibility to develop in the country. Ultimately parliamentary institutions are a projection of the people's character, thinking and aims, and he placed equal emphasis on means and ends. If it is safe to say that parliamentary democracy is established in the country, it is due to Nehru.

VII

Free India's foreign policy grew from subject India's freedom struggle. In *The Discovery of India*, Jawaharlal Nehru describes how the Congress developed a foreign policy. While several Muslim organizations took interest in Palestine and passed resolutions of sympathy for the Muslim Arabs

there, Gandhi committed the Congress to the Khilafat agitation against the dismemberment of Turkey. This apart, as early as 1920 the Congress passed a resolution on foreign policy, in which the desire of the Indian people to co-operate with other nations and especially to develop friendly relations with all neighbouring countries was affirmed. British India's foreign relations were limited to the Near and Middle East for the safeguarding of British interests there and were extended to the sending of Indian troops to the Far East from time to time; the Congress reaction was limited to this narrow horizon. There was, of course, sympathy with freedom movements everywhere, as in Egypt. The Congress did not take long to consider the possibility of another world war, and in 1927, twelve years before the Second World War started, it first declared its policy towards it. India would be no party to an imperialist war, and in no event should India be made a party to any war without the consent of her people. This declaration was frequently repeated and propaganda was carried on in accordance with it. The first task was to make it clear that Britain should not impose her wars on India and that British foreign policy could not be India's policy. It was only free India that could lay it down.

Nehru was the architect of India's foreign policy from its piecemeal beginnings; he endowed it with his vision; he was the author of Congress resolutions on that policy and he made them read like history in the making. He acknowledged his inspiration to Vivekananda and to Tagore, and there was no antithesis between Gandhi and him on internationalism, though many Congressmen did not understand it. To Gandhi, patriotism was the same as humanity and internationalism was possible only when nationalism became a fact; he said: "My idea of nationalism is that my country may become free, that if need be the whole of the country may die, so that the human race may

live." Nehru looked at the world in all its aspects and understood the forces in conflict ; it was he who invested the nationalist movement with the international outlook. In his presidential address to the Lahore Congress in 1929, he declared that India after independence would work for world co-operation.

He was sometimes alone even in the Congress ; Subhas Bose disliked moves and resolutions which seemed too idealistic ; there were many who criticized him for seeking to fight for Indian freedom on the battlefields of Spain and China. He watched with passion these storms of liberty and the din of great issues. He witnessed the battle-scarred barricades of Madrid in the Spanish Civil War and organized a medical unit for China, where he later walked about the deep dug-outs ; he was not afraid of hurting powerful nations by making the Congress extend its sympathy and support to resistance movements everywhere. Nobody was hurt by Munich as much as he, and there was no stouter opponent of fascism. He would not befriend it even for the sake of defeating British imperialism. Nearly thirty years later, the criticism looks stupid. Soon, the Second World War came with its shattering events, and even those, who thought exclusively of Indian freedom or did not think of it at all, could see that freedom was indivisible.

Internationalism can develop only in a free country, when the people are free from absorption in their freedom struggle. From the beginnings of freedom, Nehru laid down the broad lines of foreign policy firmly. From his first acts as foreign minister, from his first speeches in the Constituent Assembly, from his government's first dealings with foreign governments, it is amazing how well those foundations have stood and how little the policy has had to change. Kashmir and China may seem to be exceptions, and while they deserve separate treatment in themselves, they do not destroy the validity of his vision. As he repeatedly said in parliament,

some failures are possible and some results may be bad, but that does not invalidate principles. Nor was he too rigid in his policies. Always he worked for peace and collective security and for friendly relations with all countries; he saw no inconsistency between this and India's interests. Even during the days of the interim government, he sent Krishna Menon on a roving mission to report on the possibilities of opening diplomatic and economic relations with the countries of Europe and convened the Asian Relations Conference, which sounded the trumpet call for the freedom of all Asian countries.

To the Commonwealth, Nehru gave a new meaning. His first speech laid down non-alignment, and when people scoffed at it, he held on to it firmly, even under the impact of the massive aggression by China, and proved how practical it was. From alignment and military blocs and regional defence, the world is moving towards non-alignment and collective security. From the moment of freedom, he worked for the freedom of Asian and African peoples, and Indian delegations at the United Nations were asked to put their weight on the side of peace, disarmament, and economic and cultural co-operation. He worked for Indonesian freedom and Egyptian freedom ; he ensured peace in Korea and Indo-China ; he sent Indian troops on mercy missions. At the United Nations, he spoke more than once like a prophet, angry and soothing ; at Bandung and Belgrade, he played brilliant roles. Panch-sheel and peaceful co-existence will be associated with him. Whatever might happen, whichever nation was pleased or displeased, whatever may have been the limitations of the instruments of policy, there could be no isolation for India. She was a part of Asia and close to Africa, an inspiration to freedom movements in the two continents, but he held that the world is bigger than Asia, Africa, or Europe. He dreamed of one world ; others too have dreamed of it and many speak of it, but no one else saw it so clearly or laboured so hard for it.

VIII

Nehru disliked wars intensely and worked for peace with all his heart. He was not a pacifist and he did not dislike war only because he was Gandhi's follower. Even Gandhi wanted the non-violence of the strong, not of the weak; he did not condone cowardice; he preferred violence, if it was sustained by courage, to surrender before might; and in the conditions created by Pakistani raiders, he blessed the intervention in Kashmir, when the people invited intervention. Nehru was not interested in the metaphysics of non-violence, though he accepted its morality. But he disliked wars, the wars of history, which exterminated cultures or wrought destruction among the people, imperialist wars of this century, fascism's wars as in Abyssinia, Spain and China, and the terrible war which Hitler unleashed. Even against the atomic experiments at Bikini and other places, he protested passionately, and when he found that more than one big power had not only the atom bomb but the hydrogen bomb and their clash seemed imminent, he became a propagandist for peace. There was to be no halt to freedom struggles or to the fight against racial discrimination, but a third world war would mean total destruction and the wiping out of civilization. Peace to him was indivisible and war in Korea or Indo-China did not seem remote. Anything that happened in the world would affect India, just as what happened in India would affect the world, and he made national freedom the basis for working for peace at home and peace abroad.

Nehru worked from the beginning even against the cold war; for not only absence of war was necessary but war in the minds of men had to go. While other world leaders talked of the conditions for peace, he wanted peace in any conditions. Even the small war over the Suez Canal showed how it could affect India's development; with any war which

threatened to become a bigger war, he shuddered to think what would happen not only to India but to other countries, including the big countries with the bomb. The Indian delegation at the United Nations ceaselessly worked for disarmament; and if disarmament was to be effective, it was clear that China must be made a party to any agreement on disarmament; for this reason, if for no other, China had to be a member of the United Nations. Nehru did not believe in limited wars too, though he would not ask any nation to give up its right to self-defence, and he thought poorly of those latter-day imperialists who thought they could win their ends by limited wars.

The first danger was the bomb. Every atomic blast was a threat to the health of the people of the world, and India took the lead in working for a stopping of nuclear and thermo-nuclear experiments as a first step. Nehru made an urgent appeal to President Eisenhower and Premier Khrushchev; there was no response, though both appreciated the sincerity of the appeal and both were apologetic about the need for nuclear experiments. But the idea gathered strength, and the agreement on cessation of nuclear explosions was a tribute to India's persistence. There are some nations which have not agreed, but they too will have to submit to the pressure of world opinion. India renounced all nuclear ambitions, and though this renunciation may be seemed academic at that moment, there could be no doubt that India has the talent and resources to make the bomb and her renunciation is more than a mere gesture. India is more interested in the peaceful uses of atomic energy, and Nehru looked ahead to the time, when the world, the under-developed and the developed parts of it, would make great strides in technological revolution through atomic energy. For any agreed plan of development, the world must come together and act as one. The bomb and national sovereignty do not go together.

Again and again, Nehru referred to the Buddha and Gandhi, and again and again, he referred to Asoka, how he had renounced war after his conquest of Kalinga and how he had enunciated that there were no victors in a war. It is possible for country like India, without military might, to influence the big powers only morally. If India had military might, she would probably have little to teach others. India means four hundred and fifty million people and she must exert her moral power to influence the world in favour of peace. Neither Kashmir nor Goa nor the defence build-up on the frontier has weakened her moral strength, if she has the will to work for peace. Nehru also worked for eliminating those conditions which lead to conflict. Colonialism had to be eliminated because it led not only to conflict but to bitterness and every subject country could not produce a Gandhi; the disparities between the "haves" and the "have-nots" among the nations must go; there should be no talking or negotiating from strength; nations should work for peaceful ends through peaceful means. Even co-existence was not enough; it had to be peaceful co-existence. These were the lessons which Nehru taught the nation, not only in terms of precept, but in terms of policy. Even in the darkest days of the Chinese attack, when there was great excitement and emotional strain, Nehru spoke calmly and worked calmly because, while he warned the nation that its freedom was in peril and it must defend itself with all its might, he did not want its vision to become bloodshot. He always worked for the temper of peace, in the spirit of the Greek poet, whom he quoted more than once:

> What else is Wisdom? What
> of man's endeavour,
> Or God's high grace, so
> lovely and so great?

To stand from fear set
free, to breathe and wait ;
To hold a hand uplifted
over Hate;
And shall not Loveliness
be loved for ever ?

IX

There has been always an India ; there has not always been an Indian nation. The India of the past was a concept, a civilization, a meeting place of cultures, sometimes a dream ; there were many states in India, kingdoms and republics, and she was politically divided and different from time to time, but there was always a cultural unity and there was always a consciousness of oneness, of the Himalayas and the mighty rivers. All incoming peoples were absorbed—Greeks, Afghans, Mongols, Scythians. The impact of Muslims made a difference, but Hindus and Muslims were coming together and the confluence of two great traditions led to a new synthesis ; but it was rudely interrupted by the coming in of a third power, which sundered old bonds, prevented new bonds, promoted separatism, and led to partition. British rule gave a new political unity and free India was based on the new boundaries, still a concept, still a dream, still a land of many races and religions, of Hindus and Muslims, with cultural unity, and also with a consciousness now of territorial sovereignty.

Nehru understood this long drama of the past, of an India changing but with a continuity of tradition. The new India was to him partly the past India and partly the future India. In this India, there was place for all races, religions and communities. He insisted on this compositeness, on an acceptance of diversity within unity, because it gave scope

to the richness and variety of Indian culture, and guaranteed freedom and security to all communities. No concept of a monolithic monster in the name of oneness of culture was acceptable to him ; he rejected the imposition of any majority culture. If he was scoffed at as a nationalist Muslim, he was not angry or resentful ; he was above all religions and communities, and he belonged to all of them.

Freedom meant nothing to him if it was only political freedom and did not have social and economic content. The Constitution must be given the flesh and blood of an economic base, if it was not to be a paper constitution. The needs of the people must be met, and they must know that if they died fighting in defence of their freedom, they fought not only in defence of territory or even of the freedom to shape their destiny but in defence of standards of living and social and economic equality. So Nehru persisted with planning, when few had faith in it, worked for the industrial revolution, when the old Congress was thinking of the spinning wheel and village industries, and established dams, steel plants and scientific laboratories to make the country modern, capable of living in the new age, and economically independent as early as possible. He did not neglect the villages or forget the importance of village industries, but his approach was modern and he wanted socialism, not only because it meant social justice and equality but because it was modern and scientific and belonged to the future. There had been nation-builders who had sought to educate the people in the idea of national unity and worked for abolition of social evils, but here was a nation-builder who gave substance to the idea of nationhood and made a nation from a confused, distraught people.

This was not easy or enough. A constitution equal to the aspirations and urges of the people had to be made, and to these labours Nehru gave a direction. The British left behind nearly six hundred states with an independent status,

and there had to be first states integration ; Sardar Patel's name will always be honoured for the way in which he effected the process ; Nehru had worked for the liberation of the states people and made the accession of princes easy. The boundaries of the old provinces were haphazard and unhistoric, and states reorganization was another mighty task ; Pandit Pant played a skilful part in this process. New problems of language were added to the old ; there were linguistic minorities now, in addition to religious minorities. Nehru could fit all these problems into the framework of national unity. As he saw the nation, against the background of the past, he had great faith in the vitality and continuity of tradition, and he impressed on the people the need for catholicity of vision. Modern nations depend on the rule of law, and Nehru enhanced its prestige. Parliamentary democracy was to be supported by democratic decentralization, by the development of a sound party system, by freedom and fairness of elections. It seemed paradoxical but it was only natural that almost every party looked to him, and that even when opposition parties were prepared to oppose him, they wanted him to create an opposition to himself.

There is an India, but where are the Indians? This question has to be answered by the people. Nehru never thought in terms of religion, community, or state ; he was an Indian and a citizen of the world. In all that he did, he did not despair, though he never ceased to admonish people or urge them to action. He was willing to accept criticism; he only wanted critics to be sure of their facts, reasonable in their argument and integrated in their thinking. There was at times a sense of weariness, a mood of disappointment, and twice he wanted to resign from office, not because he wanted to escape from responsibility but because he wanted to take rest from the weariness of petty problems and petty men. He could ultimately do only what the people and the

party could help him to do. There were severe limitations on the adventuresomeness of his spirit and on his capacity to work without respite, the limitations of the people, the limitations of party and the limitations of the background. Yet he never blamed his tools; he blamed himself, and because he blamed himself, some people threw the blame for everything on him. Yet, if India has now the spirit and strength and oneness of a nation, it was largely his work.

X

Jawaharlal Nehru has been better known as a writer than a journalist, but he was both and did not think much of whatever difference there is between literature and journalism. He was a man of action who wrote, because his writing was a part of his self-expression and helped him to be a man of action. There was a literary touch in the best that he wrote and he always spoke and wrote and acted with a sense of history. But he did not consider himself a writer or a historian nor justify himself as a journalist by elevating journalism as either literature or history in a hurry; it was to him a part of action, political action and social action. He could admire literature in its typical and epic aspects and had an appreciation of the arrangement of words, but he strained for no literary effect and wrote with that quiet undertone of passion which always moved him as political leader. If the basic quality of a journalist is that he should be capable of reacting to events and of expressing his reactions as quickly and effectively as possible, Nehru, like Gandhi, was a supreme journalist.

It was a pleasure to watch him dictate or write. The views were modulated, the expression controlled, and the syntax never flagged. It was not composition; it was expression without complication, though not without reservations or

pauses or dramatic effects, but with an unfailing sense of rhythm. To his sense of history, he added a sense of rhythm which gives his writing movement and harmony. The manuscript was so clean that it would be worthy of the best of museums ; it was near perfect copy. His unsigned articles showed his mastery of what might be called the journalistic art, including rhetoric and invective, which are not found in his signed articles. There was always dignity, clarity, and freedom from cliches.

For the place of the press in national life, Nehru had high regard both during the freedom struggle and after freedom. He understood that freedom of the press was a part of the democratic process and that criticism, even if it was strong and intolerant, was a part of it. He tolerated criticism, even appreciated it. The things that upset him were malice, lack of dignity, or ignorance of history. Even if he did not respect sections of the press for not being equal to the high standards he expected of them, he upheld the principle of a free press, even in the use of the Preventive Detention Act.

For him freedom of the press, however, consisted essentially of editorial freedom and not of freedom of the master of the printing press. He had no time to study closely the complex reactions on each other of the industrial aspect and the editorial aspect, especially under the provisions of the Constitution, but he made no secret of it that the conflicts must be resolved in favour of editorial freedom. It was not merely the pressure of ownership and other internal pressures that oppressed him but the many external pressures, including the pressures of politicians. His concern for the editor's freedom extended beyond freedom of expression to relations with directors and managers. The editor's function was not to be interfered with ; he might be right or wrong ; he was to function freely, once he was appointed ; he should be free to develop character and impress his character on the paper he edited.

Post-war developments in the Indian press disappointed Nehru, as few other things did. Even in his busy term as prime minister, with an old hand's interest, he liked to have a look at newspapers, and their general characterlessness and lack of style oppressed him. Style attracted him, that something which speaks of personality. At least, he expected clear thinking, clear expression, and sincerity of feeling, and a consistency of outlook, which in his own case became consistency of vision. About the inevitability of the transformation of the mission of journalism into the newspaper industry, he had no lack of understanding. But that was no bar to his repeatedly deprecating the passing of centres of the press to a particular class of industrialists primarily interested in other industries. Whenever there was talk of growth, of increased circulations or of the need for more newsprint, he would say he did not believe in growth, though he deplored the limited circulations of newspapers and wanted circulations to grow rapidly. Sometimes, he sighed for a Northcliffe to take the Hindi press from the stage of pedantry to that of mass appeal, but he understood the distinction between the Northcliffes and the Beaverbrooks, who lived by the press and to that extent owed some responsibility to the public, and the Indian Fords, Rockefellers, and Nuffields running newspapers. He always insisted on quality, diffusion of ownership and a sense of social responsibility.

Nehru took keen interest in the appointment of the Press Commission, in its composition and in its terms of reference. It was, unfortunately, not his task to carry out the recommendations. Some have been carried out to the benefit of working journalists, for the first time fairly accurate statistics about the press have been available, and now a Press Council has been set up. But some of the crucial recommendations remain half-recommendations, remain half-remembered, and his successors, though following the

essence of his other policies, neither understand the working of the press nor think much of its correct functioning. He did not like press barons or any other barons and roused many of them to fury. He enjoyed the game; it was both fun and high politics. He was conscious he was the product of social forces and was prime minister by adult suffrage, while the press depended on mysterious forces working mysteriously.

The press set-up was familiar to him. He kept himself informed of changing ownership; he knew the limitations on the freedom of this editor or that editor; and he followed the change of policy in one newspaper or another.

At press conferences, he liked to move on terms of equality with press correspondents. No questions were barred. Sometimes the questions were irritating, at other times even insulting, but he enjoyed the exchanges and the press always looked forward to them. He also looked forward to them. He knew the faces, not always the names, but he seemed to know what was behind a question or who was behind a questioner. Press correspondents often gave more information than they sought, but everyone could grow tense and everyone could relax.

Nehru applied the same high professional standards after freedom as during the freedom struggle. In the old days, he always advised his colleagues to refer to the British authorities' debatable news items, with disputable facts, coming from Congress sources. It did not matter if they gave their version, it should also be published. He did not change his standards as prime minister. Like Gandhi, he showed always regard for facts, maintained and expected fairness, and upheld freedom of expression above printing processes. They were, of course, rebels and free men. Their contribution to India and the world will be variously assessed, but their greatness abides, and part of it is that they are among the greatest of our journalists for a long, long time.

XI

Nehru had often taken the Congress and the country into his confidence and he took them into confidence again in 1954. The references he made to his unburdening himself of high offices met with little understanding, probably because of the confusion unwittingly created by special correspondents with their love of the luxury of unhistorical surmise. When Nehru spoke his intimate thoughts, he did not speak from tiredness or according to the mood of the moment, but with a degree of objectivity and a historian's dispassionateness. His resilient mind may have suffered from staleness, but he was not referring to strain of work and deadness of routine but to something deeper, within himself and in the situation in the country. It may have been that with experience of high conduct of affairs he had known the secret of some discoveries which he must have made from the pinnacle of power and which for others who dealt in petty terms it was difficult to understand. For in spite of his frankness and his readiness to share his thoughts with the people, there was still a Nehru whom he alone knew intimately and whom he may not have presented to the world.

When the people thought of the high offices he held or the temporary retirement he had indicated, they had to remember that there was the Nehru who was greater than the prime minister, greater than the foreign minister and greater than the person who had been several times Congress President. The prime ministership had not obscured his role as the nation's leader. But it was possible to forget that he had represented the mighty forces of freedom with compelling charm and distinction. And, in spite of the trammels of office, he had increasingly shown that he was still prepared to measure for himself the opportunities that impersonal forces created. Several times, the country was

warned against pronouncing judgement on him, for his role could never be complete as long as his flexibility of mind remained. But he had seemed so indispensable that it had become usual not only for foreigners who suffered from unholy curiosity but for perplexed Indians who could not see in present stresses the future course of the country to ask what would happen after him. He had put that question to himself and to his country. It was no doubt a challenge. It was good that the challenge had been put in such a forceful manner by the man on whom the challenge was based.

The answer did not depend on the Congress presidentship or even on the prime ministership; there was a Nehru high above both these offices. It depended on the deeper forces from which men and institutions grow. These may be forces for unity or disunity, strength or weakness. There had been much discussion occasionally on the position of the Congress President, whether after freedom it should be the chairmanship of a party or the rallying point of people's inspirations represented in a party which in prestige rivalled the government. The government and the party must be complementary to each other, though the party must crystallize policies and project them and the government must be free to carry out these policies. Co-ordination had been achieved only by the same person occupying both offices, which had tended to weaken the principles underlying the democratic process. Nehru had decided not to continue as president. Either the burden had been too great, increased both by the number of inter-party quarrels and their pettiness, or there were other Congressmen who should develop the strength and prestige necessary to deserve the honour and burden of Congress Presidentship. Nehru, like Gandhi, had never quarrelled with his tools, either the party or the people, though there had been provocation for it; the party had not been the instrument

that it should be of policy and the people had not been enabled to rise to the opportunity available for articulation and mobilization of social power.

Nehru's steady leadership had not led to institutionalization of those principles of action which he embodied in his personality, so that policy, programme and institutions had begun to depend too much on his personality. Nehru had dismissed such high compliments to his historical role with characteristic casualness but there were moods which persisted and the people could understand facts only according to their capacity. Power in a state is distributed according to state purposes or the organization of the popular will for various functions. The power which Stalin had wielded was not the power which Khrushchev wielded. In China, when after the adoption of the constitution, Mao Tse-tung was made the president of the republic, it was mistakenly interpreted to mean that his symbolic leadership was divorced from effective power. In constitutional terms it was true, but Mao Tse-tung for the party and the people had been something above office ; his thought and doctrine had such influence that whatever the office he held, he would be something that could not be defined in terms of office or power. The British parallel showed that a Churchill or an Attlee could leave office without creating much disturbance. In India there had been different thoughts and they had disturbed the people and it was necessary to put the challenge in plain and open terms.

For Nehru, prime ministership had not been the usual pivotal position of the cabinet system. As a democrat, he had to observe both the processes and rituals associated with democracy and this had been one cause of staleness. It was known that he had not with him the strength which went with a cabinet of the maximum compatibility and cohesion. Few of the members of the cabinet had grown with him in struggle and achieved that understanding which

would have made policy decisions easy and their execution effective. The incompatibilities had been repeatedly forced on the people's attention, and apart from discordance in ministerial utterances and even divergence of opinion on important decisions there had been occasions when the prime minister had to intervene to explain policy or to maintain the government's prestige. Nothing could be more wearisome. But it was not exactly of the wearisomeness of debate, the drudgery that mastery of details means, the grinding of the mills of mediocrity that Nehru was thinking, when he talked of temporary retirement. He was, of course, thinking of reading and reflection, of keeping his mind alive for fresh adventures and for better service to the nation. If he withdrew even temporarily, there would be a challenge, though not so sharp or so troublesome as the challenge that might come after Nehru.

He was not thinking of searching for political heirs. Probably he had in mind some who could share his burden increasingly hereafter or shoulder prime ministership in his temporary retirement. But he was not thinking of retiring to the wilderness or mountains or going back to the plough like Cincinnatus. He had an unerring sense of history and a sense of the high destiny of the country. It was, therefore, not a question of avoiding a war of succession, it was one of giving the country a deeper integrity than it could then claim to possess. It was known that his true successors were not entirely within the Congress Party. It was only by being nearer to history than to office that he could think with detachment which might be merciless as far as individuals were concerned and work for that larger unity which could not depend on any one party. It was not a case of finding individuals or nominating successors or waiting to see them emerge but of moulding the social revolution and giving it creative leadership. He could do it only by taking the decision which his mind suggested. It

could be a momentous decision. It would give him the freedom to think and act freely. The challenge "what after Nehru?" was really a deeper challenge. Could Nehru create those conditions which would lead to unity of policy and purpose? Could he take the troubled social processes to the climax of a social revolution?

XII

Nehru, among his contemporaries, had an unerring sense of history; he also had a sense of the high destiny of his country. Even when he talked about himself, therefore, he had in mind the vast impersonal forces round him and the people to whose service he had dedicated himself and from intimate contact with whom he had always drawn his sustenance and strength. For years he had held high office and almost continuously he had been discharging heavy responsibilities to the world and to his country. When he expressed his desire to retire from office, temporarily, for a second time in 1958, he did not speak from tiredness or according to the mood of the moment but with historical objectivity and with a certain dispassionateness. He had in mind not the strain of work or the deadness of routine but something deeper within himself and in the situation in the country.

In offering to resign again, he threw a challenge but the answer to it did not depend on the prime ministership. It depended on the deeper forces from which men and institutions grow, and Nehru was keen on giving a permanent form to these forces. Though high compliments had been paid to his historical role, he knew that many of the principles which he embodied were not being translated into action. The challenge that the party faced was something more than the challenge of his temporary withdrawal

from prime ministership. For him it had been much more than the keystone of the cabinet arch. As a democrat he had had to observe both the processes and rituals associated with democracy and that was one cause of staleness. But it was not of the daily drudgery of office of which he was thinking. He was not thinking of reading and reflection and writing alone ; he was a man of action and could not think of retiring to the wilderness or the mountains. He was also not thinking of finding out political heirs. He wanted still to be nearer to history than to office.

Nehru's statement to the Congress Parliamentary Party expressing his desire to be relieved for a temporary period was important for the many impersonal issues involved. As the "final decision" must, he said, rest with the party, the party had to bear in mind what he had said. Though occasionally he had had a feeling of tiredness or a passing mood of dejection throughout the period he had been in office, his dominant sensation had been "one of absorption in my work and a certain exhilaration at facing the great problems of India and the world". It had been possible because of the intimate relationship that had grown between him and the people during forty years ; "perhaps it was this that kept me physically fit and determined to perform the duty that had been cast upon me to the utmost of my ability". That feeling of exhilaration and sense of adventure were still with him and he remained physically fit and active. Why then did he want to retire even temporarily ? The work of prime minister allowed no respite ; it was continuous, and unceasing ; much of it was routine and much required important decisions. "There was little time for quiet thinking" ; he, therefore, felt he must have a period when he could free himself from the daily burden and could think of himself "as an individual citizen of India and not as Prime Minister". There was, of course, much to think of, the international situation, for instance,

and there were the problems of India which required "constant attention and fresh thinking", for "we have to guard against getting into ruts of thought and action". There could be no rest for people like him. He was anxious to fit himself for the great tasks ahead and he felt that it might help him to do so if he was "away from the centre of activity and responsibility". He was conscious that nothing he might do would lessen that responsibility, and he had no desire to escape it, for that came to him not from the office he held but from his connection with events in India for forty years.

The party had a heavy responsibility to discharge, and whatever its wishes, it had to fulfil the trust he had put in it by meeting the underlying challenge of the situation. It had first to ask itself how he would get the time to think quietly, with the detachment which might not be possible with his burden of work as prime minister. It had then to ask itself what were the "tasks ahead" which Nehru had in mind. The question of his retirement had required greater understanding than it had received in the crude handling of it in the press at home or in some newspapers abroad which treated it as a physical or psychological problem. It was not enough for the party to say that he should not retire even temporarily. It had to think in large terms, in the terms of history itself. If it did not want to permit him to retire, it had to suggest how he could get rid of routine, cast away staleness, think afresh, and fit himself for the tasks ahead. He could divest himself of many responsibilities but he had the ultimate responsibility for the progress of the country. The party had to help him to think freely and act freely. And it had also to be ready to think and act. By giving an easy answer, it could only throw fresh responsibility on him, itself not assuming any. He had asked it to think and it had time to think.

XIII

The reactions to Jawaharlal Nehru's proposal to retire temporarily from prime ministership and his decision, under general persuasion, not to proceed with his proposal ranged, at least in the newspapers, from sensation-mongering to plain stupidity. Newspapers usually reflected a certain esoteric power of expression and little else, and so they made little contribution to history or political philosophy. But in their ephemeralness, they reflected vividly some coarseness the growing manifestation of which in public life Nehru deplored. It was a little difficult for the foreign press, particularly with cold war absorption, to achieve clarity, and even with ambling correspondents displaying their affluence in New Delhi, they got little advantage of understanding. By any standard, it was a little amusing for those who had known intimately the history of freedom in this country to read the trite columns of *The Times* or the mild megalomania which its correspondent managed to impart to the *Guardian*. Indian newspaper reaction was more saddening. The men intimately concerned with the retirement problem had no guidance for action. They went their own way, for they could claim greater objectivity.

What was it all about? Nehru wanted to retire from prime ministership temporarily, not permanently. Whether in office or not, he did not want to disown his responsibility to the people of the country or to the rest of the people of the world. He was aware of the problems the country faced, economic development, social progress, emotional integration, standards of public life. The question for him and for the Congress was whether he would be better able to lead the country and the Congress with the help of temporary retirement or even without it. There was no suggestion of physical or mental unfitness; only routine and too much work were smothering freshness. It was felt that temporary retirement

was not necessary for freshening up; conditions could be created in which he could renew his mind. It was for the party to fulfil its part, but at no time was there any suggestion that he and the party were to be detached from each other, while temporary retirement might mean divorce between power and responsibility, however necessary, and might create unnecessary constitutional and party problems. These were the main considerations, whatever might have been individual considerations, which led the party to persuade Nehru not to retire even temporarily. Neither to him nor to the party was it personal drama. If there was any dramatic element, it was provided by the unfolding drama of India's progress. This was simple enough to be understood, particularly when there was to be no permanent retirement, and the problems which had to be faced were, retirement or no retirement, to be faced by Nehru, the Congress and the country.

Why then had there been so little understanding from some quarters? They had, of course, had little to do with the Congress. First, there were foreign elements who did not like a strong India and who would like weakening of the Congress so that it might weaken the country. In this country, disappointment had been expressed mainly by those who had little to do with the Congress. It would be useful to understand this, for dealing with unresolved problems and for understanding the nature of what, according to Nehru himself, were his responsibilities. Apart from the feelings of the few in the Congress, who thought that, by withdrawal from strict party loyalties, Nehru would be able to solve outstanding problems, the reactions could be divided into two categories. There was, on the one hand, a widespread desire that Nehru should do something which would split the Congress or force a realignment on it so that the conservative elements could be divided from the elements which wanted to work for socialism; this was a desire for the

strengthening of conservative reaction. There were, on the other hand, socialists who had taken one false step after another and were in a moral and political quandary; they could not allow their prestige to suffer, and they would like Nehru to develop such detachment towards the Congress that he could rescue them and rally them in a fresh alignment. In either case, it was some kind of hostility to the Congress and some hope that it would be disrupted. The Congress leaders, almost the whole of the parliamentary party, and the vast bulk of the other Congress legislature parties did not want it. And Nehru did not want it either.

To Nehru, the Congress had remained the main instrument for shaping the destiny of the country. If his proposal for temporary retirement was looked upon as a chance for disruption or weakening of the Congress, there was bound to be disappointment. By and large, it had moved in important matters in the right direction, and whatever might be the need for the sharpening of its ideology, as far as the mass of Congressmen were concerned, they were not likely to move in the direction of the right. As long as it was capable of evolving and working in the interest of the people, it would require arguments that had not been advanced so far to make Nehru think that he would be serving the nation by doing something that might weaken or divide the Congress, when he refused to do it on earlier occasions in more provocative conditions. For those who thought that by retirement, temporary or permanent, he would contribute to the consolidation of reaction, there was disillusionment; he would not allow it even if he were to retire. From those who felt that by retiring he would contribute to strengthening of the socialist forces, no good arguments or convincing gestures had been forthcoming. The plight of disillusioned socialists who seceded prematurely from the Congress, followed negative policies, and refused to undertake responsibilities was no strong argument for Nehru to allow

himself to be detached from the Congress. He would not have been unhappy if socialists had developed the climate of socialism and their strength, Congress or no Congress. But they had been busy mainly writing essays on the discontents or dividing themselves into sects. To depend on these elements and weaken the Congress did not seem to Nehru service to the country. He had not thought of himself in isolation from the Congress, and there was no certainty that non-Congress socialists would listen to him if he were to be detached from the Congress. The disappointment could be understood, but so also the withdrawal of the proposal to retire. Nehru liked everyone to help him, become indispensable by working wholeheartedly for the progress of the country and for solution of various problems. Whether he retired or not, his problem was nation-building. In that he looked beyond the Congress. But for that, he did not think he would be justified in weakening or throwing away the organization which helped him to do so much.

XIV

Jawaharlal Nehru was seventy in 1959, but he did not measure his life in terms of the calendar, the years still passed by him lightly, and his spirit was unaging. He had said that the people of this country were all men and women of destiny, for destiny had cast a certain role on this country and they shaped its destiny and made it what they wanted it to be, and he was just one of them. To many, the romance of his beginnings never ended, Harrow and Cambridge and the early years of the freedom struggle; some thought of paying him homage; and there were some who did not stop questioning. What manner of man was he? What strange thought moved him? What was he still aiming to achieve? These were no mysteries, for, as much as Gandhi, he had

explained himself and laid his heart bare, and there was nothing even for his biographers to explain. For all his ways, he spoke the language of the people, and the language of science and of humanism. It was his closeness to the people that explained him more than anything else, and they were a strange people, diverse, incoherent, inarticulate, and with a long history, but they had strength in them, and it was from their hopes and aspirations and struggles that he had derived strength. The world had known him for what he had been, though there would never be knowing of a man who kept constantly growing, and whatever knowledge the future would bring, nobody had doubt that he had laboured greatly for his people, with great single-mindedness, with great courage, and with a great passion for truth and justice. He had laboured without wavering and without faltering, and he had taught the people discipline, dignity, and strength of character, and a certain manliness of attitude. It was from such qualities and the quality of integrity which a nation must discover in itself and cherish that the national temper grows, and it is the task of nation-builders to build good traditions for the nation.

Ten years earlier, the nation had celebrated his sixtieth birthday. He was then still a man of promise judged by the hopes of the people. At sixty, Gandhi was yet to launch some of his powerful ideas and movements; to go to a parliamentary parallel, at sixty, Gladstone was yet to launch his most radical measures. At sixty, Nehru also, in spite of the trammels of office, had a mind resilient enough for surprises, when the time was opportune. For each man must measure for himself the opportunities which impersonal forces create. No judgements could be easily passed on Nehru. His role either in the history of the Congress or that of the country was not complete. Even the youthful Nehru could do only what the country could help him to do.

These ten years had been years of promise and endeavour

and achievement. In these years, the Constitution had been promulgated and new forces had come into play, the largest electorate in the world had gone to the polls twice and elected governments of its choice, the challenge of obscurantism in the Congress had been successfully met, the goal of socialism had been adopted, planning had begun modestly to take a firm shape in the Second Plan and to be carried into the gigantic strides of a Third Plan, and the social and economic revolution had been accelerated. Revolutions start in the minds of men but it takes time to make them real, and in these ten years, Nehru had shown the capacity to be patient and to adjust his pace to the pace of the masses for pushing forward the social and economic revolution. In international affairs, in spite of recent setbacks, the country's policies had their influence in many parts of the world and they had attracted regard and admiration for their contribution to the cause of peace. All this was the work not only of Nehru but of the eager millions behind him, and he did not claim anything more. There were still big challenges, the challenge of reaction, of social and economic backwardness, of the many distempers which disturbed a new freedom. In meeting these challenges, Nehru had endeavoured to raise the values of life and to inject constantly decency and humanity into public life. He had still some old comrades to work with him, though many comrades had fallen, but it was to the present and future generations that he was looking for making the country what it could be. Though responsibilities could wear down the spirit and power could become oppressive, he did not complain, and though he could have questioned the adequacy of many people, he did not quarrel with his tools, and it was for the nation to match its effort with his and lighten the burden of the most steadfast of its servants.

XV

Nehru invites criticism more than Gandhi because he wielded power for over seventeen years and has to account for it. The consequences of Nehru and the consequences of Gandhi have become mixed and it is difficult to disentangle them. But few people think of Gandhi when criticizing Nehru. Gandhi seems remote, Nehru too near yet.

Nehru will live in people's minds for a long time and continue to be discussed. There is no escape from history, from what he did for seventeen years as free India's first prime minister. It is possible to disagree with him, to criticize him, to denigrate him, but he cannot be ignored. The succession question has so far shown that he succeeded in imparting stability to the social revolution and some continuity to the constitutional process. The fourth general election has shown that he was right in his faith in the democratic process. India will produce good leaders and prime ministers but some remain in men's minds more than others and Nehru is one of them, with all the might-have-beens.

There are questions, mainly historical, though they are often personalized, which will be asked and which future generations will answer in different ways. One important question will be whether Nehru was equal to his opportunities, whether he made the best possible use of them. He had great gifts and qualities, yet the question has persisted and will persist. He was, unfortunately for him, expected to do what others could not do or would not do or would not even help him to do. To those who were close to him from time to time and yet left him, it seemed he was not prepared to lead when he should have led. He had his own questions to put to his critics. If he failed with his opportunities, who else succeeded with his opportunities ? There was one consistency about him, that he remained what he was. But the question

what he did with his opportunities has to be asked and answered, what was the evolution he helped India achieve with his power, though it had its limitations. Among his achievements are the democratic process, the secular process, the planning process and foreign policy, but how much of it abides? It will take long to answer such questions. History is relentless, and we must leave him to it. But even history cannot separate him from Gandhi.

The Dialogue

I

GANDHI AND NEHRU GO TOGETHER IN PEOPLE'S minds, like the Castor and Pollux of the Indian Revolution. There have been other such pairs in history, like Marx and Lenin, or a whole constellation, like Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton and Madison. But no comparison could be complete or exact; association of names is often mnemonic only. There was a large constellation of Congress leaders with Gandhi, and Nehru was one of them. Yet he stands apart and closer to Gandhi in what he meant to India than others who were closer to Gandhi in association, ideas and constructive work. Gandhi and Nehru were greatly attracted to each other and worked closely together politically. Yet they were distinct from each other, each a different personality with a separate identity. They had differences, on important issues, and they were frank, sometimes harshly frank, in discussing their differences in person or through correspondence. They were, however, to come closer to each other than they were closer to anyone else. They mattered more to the course of the Indian Revolution than all the others. It is a complex yet simple story.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in 1869, a year before Lenin, in an affluent family in Porbandar. His father was Dewan of the state. The influence of his pious mother, Putlibai, was strong on him, and from the beginning, he was brought up against a religious background and showed early

stirrings of conscience. He rendered reparation for any wrong thing he did; he developed a moral sense and a habit of confession. In England, where he was sent after his matriculation to study for the bar, he worked hard, lived frugally, made several contacts and joined the Vegetarian Society. His briefs, on his return to India, were few. He went to South Africa, engaged in a case; there he was to remain for several years developing the technique of satyagraha which was to inspire the Indian settlers and strike awe in many quarters in the world. The man of strong appetites bound himself into a life of vows; he showed courage in defying unjust laws; he welcomed suffering. He showed high qualities of leadership. Now and then, he visited India in the case of the Indian settlers and became acquainted with the course of Indian public life and developed admiration for Gokhale, Ranade and Pherozeshah Mehta. On returning finally to India from South Africa, he observed silence for a year to devote himself to study, later did much volunteer work to help the British Government in the war, and was gradually compelled to take interest in Indian affairs. The Rowlatt Bills and the Amritsar tragedy made him a rebel. The constructive worker became a seditious political leader. He laid stress on means as much as on ends. Non-violence was a vital principle of life for him. The man who had dressed himself in elegant suits took to loin cloth. A mere man had been transfigured into a Mahatma.

Jawaharlal Nehru was born in 1889, twenty years after Gandhi. He was the only son of one of the leading lawyers of the country, Motilal Nehru, a Grand Mogul of a man, who lived like a prince and on equal terms with Englishmen. Nehru had an English tutor, and then was sent to Harrow at the age of fifteen, and then to Cambridge. He studied for the bar and returned home after several years, somewhat of a prig. In his *Autobiography*, he was to write, "Personally I owe too much to England in my mental make-up ever to

feel wholly akin to her" ; again, "Do what I will, I cannot get rid of the habits of mind, and the standards and ways of judging other countries as well as life generally, which I acquired at school and college in England". He practised for a time, but interest in political issues slowly overbore him. He had been under the influence of the Fabians, of revolutionary literature, including Marx, of Lowes Dickinson and Meredith Townsend, and of visiting Indian nationalist leaders like Bepin Chandra Pal and Lajpat Rai. Townsend had written in *Europe and Asia* :

> "The Indian Empire is not a miracle in the rhetorician's sense but in the theologian's sense. It is a thing which exists and is alive, but cannot be accounted for by any process of reasoning founded on experience. . . . It is a structure built on nothing."

This had impressed Nehru. His father, who had been a leading moderate, was disturbed by the happenings after the war and father and son came under the tremendous impact which Gandhi, in spite of veteran leaders like Tilak, had begun to make. Nehru's conversion was complete ; he was attracted to rebellion and once he decided to follow Gandhi, he decided to accept the discipline that went with it, Khadi, which he was to call the livery of freedom, and the Gandhi cap. The son's conversion gradually meant the father's conversion. Both were rationalists with a western outlook but they were powerless before the magic personality of Gandhi. Gandhi was about fifty, Motilal about sixty, and Nehru about thirty, when they were coming close together. Tilak, after a strenuous struggle and many controversies, was dying.

Gandhi brought Nehru back to India. Nehru wrote :

> "To some extent I came to her via the West and looked at her as a friendly Westerner might have done. I was

eager and anxious to change her outlook and appearance and give her the garb of modernity. And yet doubts rose within me. Did I know India, I who presumed to scrap much of her past heritage?"

He was to write in this poetical manner again and again, but slowly in the India of Gandhi, he was retransformed, becoming an Indian, retaining only the modernity of the West and an English sense of efficiency and an artist's understanding of the English language. Attending a Congress session, for the first time at Bankipore in 1912, as a delegate, he found it to be an English-knowing, upper class affair where morning coats and well-pressed trousers were in evidence: "Essentially it was a social gathering greatly with no political excitement or tension." Nehru met Gandhi for the first time at the Lucknow Congress of 1916. "All of us", he was to write later of that first glimpse, "admired him for his heroic fight in South Africa, but he seemed very distant and different and unpolitical to many of us young men". Gandhi was in the background of Indian political life till his genius was roused at the prospect of repression, and he formed the Satyagraha Society.

It was in May 1920 that Nehru discovered himself as a political being, though, after being a silent member of the debating societies at Cambridge, he had made his first shy speeches on his return to India. An order of externment was served on him when he took his mother and wife to Mussoorie. He went back to Allahabad but on the way he found a company of peasants who wanted his help against taluqdars and, looking at their misery, he was filled with shame at his own easy-going and comfortable life. He came into intimate contact with peasant India and threw himself ardently into the struggle of the peasants in Uttar Pradesh, where conditions were ripe for an agrarian revolution. It was the time, when Gandhi, with a prophet's sense, a prophet's

bearing and a prophet's prose, was expounding non-violence and denouncing foreign rule. It was a mass conversion for the people. Gandhi and the two Nehrus established not only political and personal but family relationship. Nehru said later :

> "It was perhaps a triangle. Gandhi, my father and myself, each influencing the other to some extent. But principally, I should imagine, it was Gandhi's amazing capacity to tone down opposition by his friendly approach. . . . Secondly, our closer association . . . brought out that Gandhi was not only a very big man and a very fine man but also an effective man . . . . Father was forced to think because of my own reaction. I was his only son ; he was much interested in me."

Gandhi and Nehru came into conflict ideologically earlier than is generally realized. When Gandhi called off civil disobedience after Chauri Chaura, where policemen had been burnt to death by a violent crowd, Nehru's spirit rebelled against it. But Nehru was yet a junior leader, though often general secretary of the Congress, and he was in no position to protest. His faith was on trial and his many questions remained unanswered. It could not be a conflict of wills ; it was never to be. But it was to be a conflict of ideas, when Nehru returned from a vastly educative tour of Europe, attending the Congress against Colonialism in Brussels and visiting the Soviet Union, and sponsored the resolution on Independence and other resolutions at the Madras Congress in 1927. Gandhi denounced the rashness and impetuosity of this attitude. At Calcutta, next year, it nearly became a conflict of wills between the younger leaders, Nehru and Bose, who stood for immediate Independence on one side, and Gandhi, Motilal Nehru and other older leaders, who pleaded for patience, on the other. Neither group yielded

to the other in nationalism and the desire for freedom. It was a question of tactics, a conflict of temperaments and age. A compromise, by which Britain was to be given a year of grace, led to the Lahore Congress, where the Congress, under Nehru's presidentship, took the Independence pledge. Nehru had not been the original or inevitable choice. Gandhi and others had received more votes. But Gandhi pressed for Nehru's election as Congress President as the only natural course. He paid Nehru many heart-warming tributes. Their differences were to persist and Nehru was often to lose his temper, but this was the beginning of their nearness. They were together in spirit; their goal for the moment was the same.

The Salt Satyagraha was a united movement, in which hearts and minds were together. It was possible to scoff at the difference between the end, which was clear, and the means, which were strange, but by then, the country could understand Gandhi and salt became a symbol. It was when, after months of repression, there were efforts at mediation that Gandhi and Nehru seemed to be apart. Motilal Nehru died, and Nehru was on his own from now on, though Gandhi was a kind of father to him. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact was a red rag to Nehru and, according to some, Nehru did not give it a chance. Gandhi came back from the Second Round Table Conference, where he had made scintillating and uncompromising speeches, disillusioned and dispirited. There were Government-Congress clashes in almost every province, and when Gandhi was arrested, there was a black-out again. Nehru, who was the foremost leader in the agitation in U. P., was already in prison. Again, Gandhi and Nehru were one in spirit. At Karachi, they had agreed on an economic programme, after a thorough exchange of views. The result was the famous Resolution on Fundamental Rights.

There was no complete agreement on the economic

substance of Swaraj, though there was complete unity on the need for Swaraj. On the method and strategy, Nehru accepted Gandhi as a guide. But from the time of the Salt Satyagraha to the time he presided at Lucknow in 1936 and at Faizpur in 1937, then during the bitter crisis created over Subhas Bose's differences with his colleagues over the Tripuri Congress, Gandhi and Nehru had open differences. Nehru was now a declared socialist round whom most socialists were gathering. Gandhi's ideas of both Swaraj and socialism were his own, somewhat different. At two crucial times, there were exchanges of letters between them. Nothing decisive emerged. It was a kind of draw. Gandhi had great regard for Nehru as an ardent soldier of freedom who had a vision of what it was. Nehru had the greatest regard for Gandhi as the leader of the freedom struggle. He fretted and fumed, but every time he found there could be no drifting away from Gandhi, who seemed to be the spirit of India. But even in his *Autobiography*, which was published in 1936, Nehru does not close the chapter of his differences with Gandhi.

The war years were to make the differences more glaring. The two different outlooks had to be spelt out in the context of the international situation and the fast developing events at home. Two crucial issues were to present themselves again and again and torment the spirits of both. How far was the Congress to non-co-operate or to co-operate with the government in the war effort ? In an anti-fascist, anti-nazi war, was the Congress to join in the war effort or not, if the substance of Swaraj was conceded? To Nehru, the issues of the war were clear; to Gandhi, with his non-violence, they were not as clear. Most of the Working Committee members differed from him, foremost among them Mr. Rajagopalachari. The Cripps proposals and other proposals came to nothing and the differences were not carried far. But when the Japanese were at the gates of

India, the issue became acute again. Was the Congress to remain passive against this threat or was it to organize self-defence? Was it to be on non-violent lines or include use of arms? The British Government's tardiness and wooden-headedness saved the situation; the controversies were never put to the test. Gandhi spoke for everyone with burning indignation with his "Quit India" campaign. To Nehru and others, it seemed that if India was to save herself, Britain, then losing everywhere, must quit. Gandhi gave another slogan, "Do or Die", in his speech at the A.I.C.C. session of August 1942. It was much misunderstood and misinterpreted in various ways.

The tide of war had turned; Britain was victorious. But the Indian National Army and mutiny in the Royal Indian Navy added to the impact of the "Quit India" movement in shaking the Empire. The British were ready with fresh proposals. Then the Cabinet Mission came. From the time of the Cripps mission, all British proposals had carried with them implicitly a proposal for partition and Pakistan. Here then, again, were differences between Gandhi, on one side, and Nehru, Azad and Patel, on the other. Gandhi could not think of vivisection; the others too did not like it. But all of them ardently desired freedom and were for "Quit India" in spirit, and they saw in the major proposals of the Cabinet Mission the prospect of freedom. The Congress had during the war years accepted the principle of not forcing unwilling parts of the country to join the Indian Union; for a time, it meant a gesture to the Muslim League, or the bulk of Mulims who thought with it; step by step, it meant that if Jinnah and the Muslim League insisted on partition, it could not be avoided. It was the fulfilment of separate electorates; the presence of a third party ensured it. But it could not be denied, unless freedom was to be postponed probably for ever. Nobody liked it; nobody foresaw the bloody events which followed. Gandhi was

throughout protesting against partition; he was not a party to it in any way, but he did not oppose it in the way he could have opposed it. Then there were days of agony, and as head of the interim government, Nehru received constant sympathy and comfort from Gandhi. Events were beyond their control, though they had made many events. In the Nehru-Patel differences too, Gandhi was to play a soothing role. He was to bring them together finally; in that hour, he was shot dead. Death did what nothing else could do.

Nehru's relations with Gandhi were sublimated by Gandhi's death and the manner of it. There were several phases in their nearness. The early years were of father, son and Gandhi. Then there were the early differences on Gandhi's then mysterious strategy and tactics of non-violence. On the content of Swaraj, they differed often in spite of frequent communication; there were differences on industrialization, on the war. Nehru's mystification was being reduced with each controversy. He was discovering not only Gandhi but India from time to time. In the *Autobiography* there was much questioning; in *The Discovery of India* much acceptance. By 1942, there was understanding; differences of approach still persisted; but in 1948, with Gandhi's crucifixion, Nehru had no doubts. Gandhi was the master. He had become a part of history; and Nehru passed into history on his own, as free India's first prime minister for seventeen years of effort, achievement and controversy.

Nehru's part in the fight for freedom, his evolution, even his assertiveness could be traced to Gandhi. Like Gandhi, Nehru was free from fear; both believed in right means and ends. The contributions of both together and separately to human values are great. Nehru referred to Gandhi as his master, after the master's death, but Gandhi did not pretend to be the master and Nehru was not a "disciple". They were independent of each other, two in one, one in two. They

worked on the same moral plane and they both loved the people, in different ways, but, while they agreed and disagreed and agreed, they knew each other as others did not know either of them. In his understanding of Gandhi and the expression he gave to it, Nehru was the greatest Gandhian.

There has been much escapism on the question of the respective contributions of Gandhi and Nehru. Each owed responsibility to the Indian Revolution and Nehru's share in it began at least from the time of the Lahore Congress of 1930, where he declared himself to be a socialist and republican, or earlier with his participation in peasant movements. Gandhi remained himself, but the economic programme, though not all its content, which he accepted in the end was Nehru's programme; his idea of the international situation was based on Nehru's appreciation of it, and that appreciation influenced Congress policy towards the war and on the war. If this was the relationship between the two leaders from 1930 to 1948, when Gandhi died, it would seem unhistorical to seek to separate them forcibly. The way Nehru tried to extend the spirit of Gandhi into the moral and other aspects of the structure of the state is a different subject. Like Gandhi, Nehru too never complained about his tools, though he had to work with clumsy tools. He applied Gandhi to the needs of a modern nation state. In that something of Gandhi was knocked out; everything could not be absorbed. But nobody absorbed so much of Gandhi as Nehru did or incorporated so much of him in the inexorable working of statehood. How much of Gandhi Nehru knocked out consciously in shaping the development of the country is difficult to assess. It is even a controversial subject, and belongs to Nehru's biography. The aim of this book is to take the two biographies together, briefly, to see what each meant to his people and to each other. There is no Gandhism; there is no Nehruism. Neither wanted any

such thing. Nehru said about Gandhi what could be said of himself:

"Gandhi was something much bigger than all one had imagined him to be. He had that remarkable quality of allowing and even encouraging those who were privileged to follow him to think out their problems for themselves —with his guidance to them, of course,—but to come to their own decisions and to act more according to their own light, even though that light may be dim. He did not want to impose himself on anyone. He certainly wanted to win the minds and hearts of people in his own way, which was not that of imposition. He did not want people to suppress and compress themselves and blindly say or do what he said. That was not the kind of following he wanted. . . . So, when problems come, it becomes our duty, I imagine, to come to our own decisions about them, keeping in view, of course, what we have learnt from him, but to come to our own decisions and not take shelter in something that he might have said under different circumstances or on a different occasion . . . ."

Nehru's place is by the side of Gandhi. They go together. History will find it difficult to separate them.

II

Nehru saw Gandhi for the first time at the Lucknow Congress of 1918, but the first moments of understanding between them cannot be fixed firmly in time.

Gandhi reached Bombay, accompanied by Nehru, for Tilak's funeral. Later, they must have met casually at meetings of Congress bodies. Nehru stated before a magistrate in May 1922 at the second of the eight trials which he faced :

"To serve India in the battle of freedom is honour enough. To serve India under a leader like Mahatma Gandhi is doubly fortunate. But to suffer for the dear country! What greater fortune could befall an Indian, unless it be death for the cause or the full realization of our glorious dream?"

The Chauri Chaura incidents, in which policemen had been burnt by a violent mob, were followed by Gandhi's withdrawal of the movement, and Nehru, his father and others were upset. On February 19, 1922, Gandhi wrote to Nehru saying that he knew the resolution of the Working Committee suspending non-co-operation had upset him and Motilal Nehru and others. Gandhi sympathized with them, but the first shock must have been followed by a true understanding of the situation. The brutal murder of the constables by an infuriated mob could not be denied, nor could it be denied that it was a politically-minded crowd; it would have been criminal not to have heeded such a "clear straw". Gandhi explained to Nehru that if the thing had not been suspended they would have been leading not a non-violent struggle but essentially a violent struggle. The cause would prosper by the retreat. They had come back to their moorings and they could again go straight ahead. Nehru was in as disadvantageous a position as Gandhi was advantageously placed for judging events in their due proposition.

Then there was a succession of other important, though less sensational, events: the Great Trial, so-called because of Gandhi's classic statement of defence and Justice Bromfield's humane attitude, the operation on Gandhi for appendicitis, the division of Congressmen into Swarajists and no-changers. After the Belgaum Congress, over which he presided, Gandhi sought to bring about unity in Congress ranks and nominated all Swarajists to the Working Committee. But he insisted on Nehru being elected as working secretary of the A.I.C.C. again.

There was an interesting correspondence between Gandhi and Nehru on Nehru's future. How could Nehru carry on public work without depending on his father? Gandhi would not hesitate to ask friends to pay Nehru for his public services; they would consider it a privilege. Nehru could pay himself from public funds, if his wants were not extraordinary, owing to the situation in which he was. Gandhi was also convinced that Nehru should contribute to the common purse by doing some business or by letting personal friends find funds for retaining his services. There was no immediate hurry; Nehru could come to a final decision without fretting about it. He would not mind if he did some business; nor would Motilal Nehru. His peace of mind was what mattered.

There was a year of silence and Gandhi was a pilgrim again. There were questions about the Tilak Swaraj Fund. Gandhi asserted that there no loss had been sustained beyond what a careful merchant suffered. In Nehru and in Jamnalal Bajaj, the Congress had an incorruptible working secretary and an incorruptible working treasurer. Seventy-five per cent of the funds were administered locally by local representatives and the largest amounts were mostly earmarked and controlled by the donors.

At the Madras Congress, 1927-28, Nehru, who had just returned from a visit to Europe including the Soviet Union, presented resolutions on Independence, on the war danger, on association with the League against Imperialism, and they were adopted. The Congress adopted a new look, and it was the beginning of Nehru's new role as Congress spokesman on international affairs. Gandhi had no hand in the shaping of policy; he attended the open session of the Congress but did not attend the meetings of the Working Committee, though he was a member. He did not like the resolution on Independence or the resolution on boycott of British goods. He used strong words, saying that the Congress

stultified itself by repeating year after year resolutions of this character. By passing such resolutions, they made an exhibition of themselves and became the laughing stock of critics. The Congress sank to a schoolboys' debating society.

At the Calcutta Congress of 1928-29, a split between the younger section led by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose over dominion status or independence seemed imminent. Nehru moved an amendment to the official resolution. It was, he admitted, unbecoming for him as the secretary of the A.I.C.C. to challenge a resolution recommended by the Working Committee and it might be considered presumptuous on his part to challenge a resolution approved by Gandhi. Notwithstanding, he had felt it incumbent to do so because of the very lesson Gandhi had taught him when he had the privilege to serve under his banner. Gandhi effected a compromise by agreeing to alter the wording of the resolution so as to give the British Parliament a time-limit of one year, instead of two years, in which to accept the constitution as recommended by the Nehru Report. In the open session, Bose moved an amendment to the compromise resolution and he was supported by Nehru, though both had been parties to the compromise. Gandhi felt hurt and spoke bitter words. The amendment was lost by nearly 500 votes. In his concluding remarks, Motilal Nehru said that Bose and Nehru had said in their speeches on the amendment that the old-time men were no good, were not strong enough, and were hopelessly behind the times. But one year was nothing in the history of the nation and he had no doubt that the next Congress would see them united and taking another forward step.

There was a campaign of repression all over the country and the A.I.C.C. met in May, 1929, to consider Gandhi's plan of resistance. In June Gandhi left for Almora and other hill places, at the instance of Nehru. In July, Gandhi's name was proposed for Congress Presidentship, but he declined

the offer and proposed Nehru's name. The battle of the future had to be fought by younger men and they should be led by one of themselves. Nehru had everything to recommend him. He had for years discharged with singular ability and devotion the office of secretary of the Congress. By his bravery, determination, application, integrity and grit, he had captivated the imagination of the youth of the land. He had come in touch with labour and peasantry. His close acquaintance with European politics was a great asset. There were arguments in favour of Gandhi becoming president, but Gandhi said whatever special qualities he was supposed to possess, he would be able to exercise them more effectively by remaining detached from office. God had enabled him to affect the life of the country, since 1920, without the necessity of office. He was not aware that his capacity for service was a bit enhanced by his becoming President of the Congress at Belgaum. Those who knew the relations that subsisted between him and Nehru would recall that Nehru being in the chair was as good as Gandhi being in it. They may have had their intellectual differences, but their hearts were one. With all his youthful impetuosities, Nehru's sense of stern discipline and loyalty made him an inestimable comrade in whom one should put implicit faith. Would not Nehru's name be a red rag to the English, asked others. A President of the Congress was not an autocrat; he worked within the limitations of a constitution; the Congress was an old organization with a status above its most distinguished presidents, and the British had to deal with the Congress. Gandhi's advice, therefore, was that Nehru should be made the President with the fullest confidence and hope. Some hoped Gandhi would reconsider his decision. Ten P. C. C.s had nominated him; five had nominated Sardar Patel; and three had nominated Nehru. The A.I.C.C. met in September in Lucknow to decide finally and Gandhi pressed Nehru's name. He wrote that though some saw in

the transference of power from the old to the young the doom of the Congress, he did not. He had ascertained from Nehru whether he felt strong enough to bear the weight. Nehru had said: "If it is thrown upon me, I hope, I shall not wince."

> "In bravery, he is not to be surpassed. Who can excel him in the love of the country? 'He is rash and impetuous', say some. This quality is an additional qualification, at the present moment. And if he has the dash and the rashness of a warrior, he has also the prudence of a statesman. A lover of discipline, he has shown himself to be capable of rigidly submitting to it even when it has seemed irksome. He is undoubtedly an extremist, thinking far ahead of his surrounding. But he is humble and practical enough not to force the pace to the breaking point. He is pure as the crystal, he is truthful beyond suspicion. He is a knight *sans peur et sans reproche*. The nation is safe in his hands."

In November Gandhi made a tour of U.P., and at the end of it, his message was that he wanted U.P. to be like Nehru. At midnight of 1930, at Lahore, independence became the goal and the flag of independence was unfurled. In his presidential address, Nehru declared himself a republican and a socialist.

III

The Independence Pledge was taken, but there was no meeting ground between the government and the Congress. Gandhi prepared the Congress to launch a campaign to break the Salt Law. He served a notice of demands on the Viceroy; the Viceroy did not respond. It was to be a strange type of

satyagraha and many did not understand what its dimension could be. Gandhi chose the Salt Law as a symbol of British yoke on India. Salt was what the poor man should have free, but the government taxed it. The *ashram* at Sabarmati became a satyagrahis' war camp and day after day Gandhi explained the meaning of the satyagraha and his plan to march to Dandi where he was to make salt in defiance of the law.

On March 12 at 6.30 A.M., Gandhi started on his march with seventy-eight followers. Nehru observed:

> "Today the pilgrim marches onward on his long trek. Staff in hand he goes along the dusty roads of Gujarat, clear-eyed and firm of step, with his faithful band trudging along behind him. Many a journey he has undertaken in the past, many a weary road traversed. But longer than any that have gone before is this last journey of his, and many are the obstacles in his way. But the fire of a great resolve is in him and surpassing love of his miserable countrymen. And love of truth that scorches and love of freedom that inspires. And who that passes him can escape the spell, and men of common clay feel the spark of life. It is a long journey, for the goal is the independence of India and the ending of the exploitation of her millions."

On March 21, the A.I.C.C. met on the banks of the Sabarmati and laid down a programme for carrying on the campaign if Gandhi was arrested. At Jambasar Motilal and Nehru met Gandhi and spent a few hours with him. There Motilal, in consultation with Gandhi, decided to make a gift of his political house in Allahabad, Anand Bhavan, to the nation on April 6, the first day of the National Week. On April 8, Gandhi broke the Salt Law, but he was not arrested. On April 14, Nehru was arrested, tried in prison and sentenced to six months' imprisonment under the Salt

Act. He had nominated Gandhi to act as the Congress President, but Gandhi had declined and Motilal became the acting President. The movement gathered momentum all over the country. Vithalbhai Patel tendered his resignation of the Speakership of the Central Legislative Assembly. There were repression, disturbances and arrests. On May 4, Gandhi was arrested at 12-45 A.M. under Regulation XXV of 1827. Other leaders were arrested one after another, as they took over the leadership of the satyagraha. On June 30, Motilal was arrested and the Working Committee was declared an unlawful association.

The report of the Simon Commission was published and its recommendations were denounced by most sections of the country as disappointing. Even moderate leaders like Malaviya and Aney threw in their lot with the Congress and courted arrest. In an address to a joint session of the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly, the Viceroy said, it should be possible to reach solutions by way of conference. Nationalist and Independent members of the legislature unanimously passed a resolution authorizing M. R. Jayakar to negotiate for a settlement between the Congress and the government. The Viceroy was to allow Sapru and Jayakar to see Gandhi, Motilal and Nehru in jail. The two intermediaries had prolonged talks with Gandhi in the Yeravada jail and left for the Naini jail with a letter and a note from Gandhi for the Nehrus. In his letter to Motilal, Gandhi stated "Jawaharlal's must be the final voice", and Gandhi would have no hesitation in supporting any "stronger position" up to the letter of the Lahore resolution. He himself could not give a decided opinion, "being temperamentally so built".

Sapru and Jayakar met the Nehrus in the Naini jail on July 27 and the Nehrus refused to make any suggestion without first consulting the Working Committee and Gandhi. They were also not satisfied with the terms which Gandhi

had stipulated for the conference. Gandhi revised his terms. The Nehrus were taken to Yeravada and on August 13, 14 and 15, there were prolonged talks between the two negotiators, on one side, and the Congress leaders, on the other. Gandhi and the Nehrus signed a letter saying that the language used by the Viceroy about the conference was vague and they must consult the Working Committee and, if necessary, the A.I.C.C. to say anything authoritative, and that as far as they were concerned, no solution would be satisfactory unless it recognized the right of India to secede from the British Empire and it gave to India complete national government responsible to her people. The Viceroy rejected any further negotiations as useless after these proposals. The First Round Table Conference met in London, and after many speeches and some labour through committees, it suspended its work in January, 1931, so that Indian opinion could be consulted. Lord Willingdon was to succeed Lord Irwin as Viceroy and the British Prime Minister, Mr. MacDonald, said that if there was response to the Viceroy's appeal from those engaged then in civil disobedience, steps would be taken to enlist their services. On January 25, Gandhi and members of the Working Committee were released without conditions. On February 6, Motilal died in Lucknow, and Gandhi, more than others, felt greatly bereaved, saying that his position was worse than a widow's.

There was a flurry of negotiations in the days that followed. Gandhi sought an early interview with the Viceroy and Lord Irwin agreed. The talks between them began on February 17, and like other leaders, Nehru was at hand in Delhi. The negotiations were protracted. There were several formulas, conditions and counter-conditions. Nehru was against acceptance of any basis of discussion short of complete independence. The talks might be broken on any subject, on prisoners, on land, or no picketing. On March 5, at noon, agreement was signed between Lord Irwin and Gandhi to

their relief, after a fortnight's negotiations in which Gandhi called on the Viceroy eight times and spent with him nearly twenty-four hours. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact is history now. It was to be broken on both sides. To moderates, the wrecker on the Congress side was Nehru.

Gandhi was to attend the Second Round Table Conference as the sole representative of the Congress. He was very busy in the following weeks. In one of the intimate talks he had with his colleagues on his morning walks, he and Nehru discussed the future of the Congress. Nehru had thought that the Congress as such would cease to exist with the achievement of freedom; Gandhi thought that the Congress should exist but none of its members could accept a paid job under the state, and if anyone took up such a job, he would leave the Congress; the Congress was to be a moral force.

It was an uneasy truce, and the question of political prisoners had yet to be settled. Gandhi met the Viceroy on March 19 and pleaded again for commutation of the death sentences on Bhagat Singh and his comrades. The Viceroy would not agree. In the early hours of March 23, Gandhi wrote a letter appealing to the charity of Lord Irwin as "a great Christian". But Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were hanged in the night of March 23 in the Lahore jail. The country was shocked and disgusted. Nehru said: "The corpse of Bhagat Singh shall stand between us and England."

The Congress was meeting at Karachi about that time, and there was much unrest over the executions. It required much courage on the part of Gandhi and other leaders to pacify the angry crowds. Nehru's strength of character was severely tested. He moved the resolution on Bhagat Singh and his comrades which had been drafted by Gandhi and, moving it, he said:

> "We would have wished that the author of the resolution who has inaugurated in history a unique movement should

> have moved the resolution on Bhagat Singh, who diametrically differed from him in his methods. But it is physically impossible. For every little thing we have had to seek his help, for every resolution we have had to trouble him with a draft with the result that his day and night in Karachi have been one long day and he has not had a moment of rest."

Why was the apostle of non-violence anxious to pay the highest tribute to Bhagat Singh, although hundreds lost their lives all over the country? It was because Bhagat Singh's self-sacrifice and bravery had passed the upper limits. But they must not forget the path of non-violence. He was not ashamed of the cult of violence but he felt that the cult could not be practised for the present in the best interests of the country.

The main resolution authorized Gandhi to represent the Congress at the Round Table Conference "with the addition of such other delegates as the Working Committee may appoint to act under his leadership". Nehru, in moving the resolution, said:

> "We cannot afford to be here and there and do two things at the same time. For this I implore you to decide once for all. So far we have decided to abide by Gandhiji, and let us do so until we see the way blocked for further progress."

The Karachi session was to become famous for the resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic Policy. It was a reconciliation of two differing outlooks. In it the views of Gandhi and the views of Nehru reached a synthesis. This was achieved during early morning talks between them in February and March 1931. Nehru raised the matter and Gandhi welcomed the idea of a resolution on economic

matters. Gandhi asked him to bring the matter up at Karachi, to draft a resolution and show it to him. Then Gandhi made some changes in it. He wanted that both of them should agree on the wording of the resolution before the Working Committee could be asked to consider it. Nehru, though a fine draftsman whose drafts required few changes, made several drafts. Ultimately Gandhi and Nehru agreed on a draft and this was placed before the Working Committee and later before the Subjects Committee. The resolution contained the essence of the social and economic programme of the Congress, which holds good till today. To Gandhi, it indicated to the poor inarticulate masses the broad features of Swaraj or Ram Raj. Speaking on the resolution, he said that by passing the resolution, they made it clear to the world and to their own people what they proposed to do as soon as they came into power. He read the resolution word by word and annotated every part of it. It was by no means final; the A.I.C.C. could raise, amend or add to the twenty points. To Nehru the passing of the resolution was a matter for great satisfaction. It was not socialism, but it was a step forward.

After the Karachi Congress there were many hurdles to be cleared before Gandhi could be enabled to go to London. There were accusations of breaches of the truce both by the government and the Congress. Provincial governments were taking repressive measures and provoking Congressmen. After Lord Willingdon took over as Viceroy, there was no more of the Irwin touch. Gandhi carried on a prolonged correspondence with the Viceroy. There were some incidents of terrorism and there was agitation in the United Provinces and the North-Western Frontier Province. The campaign in Bardoli and other places in Gujarat particularly disturbed the government. Further correspondence between the Viceroy and Gandhi followed and a last-minute effort was made to avert a breakdown. In August Gandhi went to

Simla for an interview with the Viceroy and carried on the negotiations, in consultation with Sardar Patel, Nehru, Ghaffar Khan and Dr. Ansari. Agreement was reached. The Congress would be represented at the Round Table Conference; the settlement of March 5 would remain operative, there would be an inquiry into Congress allegations of repression in Bardoli but no inquiry into any other complaint made by the Congress would be held. This was called the "second settlement". Gandhi hurriedly left for Bombay to catch the boat for London.

Gandhi's visit to England was of great social interest but the sparkling speeches he made at the Round Table Conference did not produce results. In India the situation deteriorated. There was a deepening crisis in the North-West Frontier Province and in the United Provinces a drastic ordinance was promulgated to meet a no-rent campaign. When he landed in Bombay on December 28, Gandhi was for peace, in spite of several ordinances. There was correspondence with the Viceroy but Lord Willingdon's responses were wooden. On the morning of January 4, 1932, Gandhi was arrested in Bombay and taken to Yeravada jail, under Regulation XXV of 1827. Sardar Patel was detained along with him. Nehru, who had been under arrest, was tried the same day and sentenced to two years' imprisonment. The arrest of other leaders followed. There were massive demonstrations and repression was intense. In March Gandhi wrote to Sir Samuel Hoare without effect. Ramsay MacDonald's Communal Award, which included separate electorate for the Scheduled Castes, was announced, and Gandhi undertook a fast unto death to get the award about the Scheduled Castes annulled. After protracted anxiety and many negotiations between Congress leaders and leaders of Scheduled Castes, he succeeded. His mind was now turned to the cause of the Harijans.

There was much opposition to what was known as the

Yeravada pact, mainly from the orthodox sections and Gandhi started "an unconditional and irrevocable" fast for twenty-one days from May 8. It was one of his many calls from within. "What can I say about matters that I do not understand?" wrote Nehru from jail. "I feel lost in a strange country where you are the only familiar landmark and I try to grope my way in the dark. But I stumble. Whatever happens, my love and thoughts are with you." The fast ended without danger to Gandhi's life. He seemed to have gathered fresh inner strength. As Gandhi organized his campaign for the uplift of the Harijans and began the first of his Harijan tours, there was an air of relaxation and Nehru was released. He and Gandhi met in Poona, after nearly more than two years. There was an intense exchange of views between them, which took the form of letters, to be known as the Poona statements, published in September 1933.

The correspondence provides a commentary on their conflict of outlooks, which runs throughout their lives. Nehru's insistence was on the economic programme of the Congress as laid down at Karachi. Gandhi relied on an all-inclusive complete Independence and he agreed that without a material revision of the vested interests the condition of the masses could never be improved. Nehru wanted the political objective to be defined clearly, for only a truly inspiring political ideal could enlist the support of the masses in the political struggle. Gandhi's view was that once the goal was fixed, he was not interested in its repetition but only in its progressive realization. His goal had been set forth in *Hind Swaraj* as long ago as 1908. Gandhi felt that though there was agreement between them in the enunciation of ideals, there were temperamental differences between them. Progress towards the goal was to him in exact proposition to the purity of their means. About Nehru's objections to the way civil disobedience had been

suspended by Aney, acting President of the Congress, Gandhi felt that even if it had not been withdrawn, the movement would have collapsed from internal weakness. He had no sense of defeat and the hope that the country was fast marching towards its goal was burning as bright as it had burned in 1920.

Gandhi was busy with Harijan work and Nehru was in jail, when the Bihar earthquake which caused great devastation struck the nation dumb. Gandhi's attention was given to organizing relief for stricken Bihar. In the lull in civil disobedience, a conference of Congressmen at Delhi decided to revive the Swaraj Party and take part in the coming elections. Gandhi was for suspending civil resistance and welcomed the decision, though he still saw no use for legislatures at the time. He issued a statement on the position saying it was again an admission that the country was not prepared for satyagraha, which was not mere civil resistance, and that civil resisters must engage themselves in constructive work. It was his advice; he was not usurping the function of the Congress. Swarajists welcomed the statement; it was to be a dual programme of fighting both within and without the legislatures. Nehru, in jail, was shocked; he felt the "chords of allegiance that had bound me to him for many years had snapped". The government welcomed the development; the A.I.C.C. was to be allowed to meet. On June 6, the government lifted the ban on the Congress. But special laws were still in force and Sardar Patel, the President, and Nehru, the General Secretary, and other leaders were in jail, when the Working Committee met, after about thirty months, and laid down the new programme.

IV

On August 1935, when the Working Committee met,

Nehru, like the Khan brothers, was still in prison, though work in the legislatures was going on. As soon as he was released, Nehru flew to Europe. His autobiography, which was published in England, was greeted as a kind of classic, a story of the freedom struggle and of his inner struggle. In that book, he stated, frankly and with reverence, his differences with Gandhi, how much he questioned Gandhi, how much he was baffled by Gandhi's contradictory moves, and how much he was impelled to follow him.

On his return from Europe in March 1936, Nehru presided over the Lucknow Congress. He declared himself a socialist again, but with greater clarity and conviction than before and was critical of the working of the Congress. His visit to Europe had left an impact on him. He had watched the forces of fascism growing and he was on the side of socialism more than ever. The Congress had lost touch with the masses, he said. The Government of India Act was a "new charter of slavery". Independence could come only by means of a Constituent Assembly. The opportunity for such an assembly would arise sooner perhaps than they expected. Every war waged by the imperialist powers would be an imperialist war, whatever the excuses; they must keep out of it. When the provincial part of the Government of India Act came into force, the Congress should certainly contest the elections to the legislatures, but Congressmen should not accept office.

Nehru referred to Gandhi in fervent terms. During a difficult period, the great leader had guided and inspired them by his dynamic personality. Ill health had prevented him from taking his full share in public activities. Their good wishes went to him for his rapid and complete recovery. They had differed from him in the past and might differ from him in the future about many things, and it was but right that each one of them should stick to his convictions. But the bonds that held him and them together

were stronger and more vital than their differences, and the pledges they had all taken together still rang in their ears. He had taught them fearlessness and discipline and the will to sacrifice oneself for the larger end. No leader, however great, could shoulder the burden single-handed; they must all share it to the best of their ability and not seek helplessly to rely on others to perform miracles.

There was a new spirit in the Congress, and it adopted most of the resolutions sponsored by Nehru, including a far-reaching resolution on agrarian reform. But it was clear that the majority gave full support to the old leadership. The Congress President could nominate the Working Committee but he could not override the majority view. Nehru offered his resignation at the outset but he was persuaded to remain and continue. He selected for the Working Committee Subhas Bose, Narendra Deva, Jayaprakash Narayan and Achyut Patwardhan among others.

Towards the end of June, the Working Committee was meeting in Wardha and Gandhi walked from Sevagram to Wardha every morning to attend the meetings. Nehru was preaching socialism from every platform, but some of the members were not in agreement and they offered their resignation. Gandhi persuaded them to withdraw their resignations, but the differences persisted. There was some correspondence between Nehru and Gandhi, and it is one of the best commentaries on the differences in their outlooks and in their relations.

Nehru poured out his heart in a letter dated July 5. He had been feeling weak in body and troubled in mind, partly due to physical causes but partly due to other causes which touched the mind and the spirit directly. He had found that the meetings of the Working Committee exhausted him greatly; they had a devitalizing effect on him. He had been told that the country was demoralized and they had to go slow, but he had found a bubbling

vitality wherever he had gone and he had been surprised at the public response. He was grateful to Gandhi for the trouble he had taken in smoothening over matters and in helping to avoid a crisis. He was convinced that a break of the kind suggested would have had serious consequences for their work, including the elections. Yet, where were they now and what did the future hold for them? He had expressed his ideas at length and they were a part of him. For the sake of a larger unity, to which he attached importance, however, he had tried to express them in the mildest way possible and more as an invitation to thought than as fixed conclusions. He saw no conflict in this approach and in anything that the Congress was doing.

There were reports that differences between Gandhi and Nehru, who was now plunged in the election campaign which was to be a new experience for him, were growing. Gandhi denied it in an article in *Harijan*, dated July 25, under the headline, "Are We Rivals?" Remarks said to have been made by him had been reproduced, but he had never said anything of the kind, nor uttered one single remark attributed to him in the two articles sent to him. What was more, he had not even entertained the opinions contained in those articles. So far as he was aware, Nehru had come to the conclusion that India's freedom could be gained by non-violent means. And he knew for a fact that Nehru had not come out in favour of violence at Lucknow. There were no doubt differences between them; they were clearly set forth in the letters they had exchanged some years ago. But they did not affect their personal relations; they remained the same adherents to the Congress goal. He could not think of himself as a rival to Nehru or Nehru to him. If they were rivals, they were rivals in making love to each other in the pursuit of the common goal. If in the joint work for reaching the same goal, they at times seemed to be taking different routes, he hoped the world could find

that they had lost sight of each other only for the moment and only to meet again with greater mutual attraction and affection.

In an interview to Basil Mathews, Gandhi was asked if his economic policy would differ from that of Nehru, who would wipe out the zamindar. Gandhi replied in the affirmative; he and Nehru seemed to differ in their ideas of village uplift and reconstruction. The difference was of emphasis. Nehru did not mind the village movement. He believed in industrialization, but Gandhi had grave doubts about its usefulness for India.

There was soon to be another Congress session and there was much discussion who was to be President. Nehru in a statement said that if any of his colleagues was elected, he would co-operate with him. If the choice fell on him, he dared not say no. But before they so decided, they must fully realize what he stood for. In withdrawing from the election, Sardar Patel said that his withdrawal should not be taken to mean that he endorsed all the views Nehru stood for. For instance, he did not believe that it was impossible to purge capitalism of its hideousness; the acceptance of office was not a live issue then, but he could visualize the occasion when the acceptance of office might be desirable to achieve the common purpose. There might be sharp differences with Nehru but they knew him to be loyal to the Congress to disregard the decision of the majority. The President had no dictatorial powers; he was the chairman of their well-built organization. Nehru became President of the Congress session at Faizpur, a village in East Khandesh. It was the first village session of the Congress and Gandhi was keen on making it a success.

At Faizpur, there was a difference of opinion over the question of office acceptance and the majority favoured the postponement of the decision till after the general elections were over. To Nehru, the real object before them was to

build up a powerful joint front of all the anti-imperialist forces in the country. The active participation of the organized workers and peasants in such a front would add to its strength and must be welcomed. Co-operation between them and the Congress organizations had been growing and had been a marked feature of the past year. This tendency must be encouraged.

In March, Congress members of the provincial legislatures met at Delhi and Nehru administered to them an oath in Hindi pledging them to work for a free and independent India. When the leaders of the Congress parties in the six provinces were invited to form cabinets, Nehru said that office acceptance did not mean acceptance of a slave constitution.

V

Early in 1939, controversy arose over the Congress Presidentship. The names of Azad, Subhas Bose and Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya were mentioned, but it was suggested that two of them should retire, leaving the third to be elected unanimously. Azad issued a statement declining Presidentship for reasons of health and suggesting Dr. Pattabhi. Next day Bose issued a statement that the election would be fought; according to him, a feeling had grown in the country that "as in other free countries the presidential elections in India should be fought on the basis of different problems and programmes". Seven members of the Working Committee, excluding Nehru, issued a statement, at Gandhi's instance, repudiating the validity of the reasons given by Bose for a contest. Bose was setting up a new precedent for an office to which elections had been unanimous and they had grave doubts about the issue he proposed. Congress policy and programmes were not determined by

its successive Presidents; if it were so, the constitution would not limit the office to one year only. The policy and programme, when they were not determined by the Congress, were determined by the Working Committee. The position of the President was that of a chairman, and he represented and symbolized the unity and solidarity of the nation. Bose made a long rejoinder insisting that the Congress President was more like the Prime Minister of Britain or the President of America nominating his own cabinet, that he was not like a constitutional monarch, that the questions of policy and programme were not irrelevant, and that election for Congress Presidentship had never been unanimous.

The controversy went on with statement and counter-statement. A statement by Sardar Patel said that

> "... at informal consultations at one stage or the other at which Maulana Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Bhulabhai Desai, Kripalani, Mahatma Gandhi and myself were present, not by design but by accident, it was agreed that if perchance Maulana Azad remained adamant, in his resistance, then according to the constitution, Dr. Pattabhi was the only choice left, since we were clearly of the opinion that it was not necessary to re-elect Subhas Bose."

On January 27, Nehru made a statement. Wrong issues had been raised in the presidential election campaign; there was no conflict over the federation in the election, as the Congress had rejected the scheme. He did not see what principles or programmes were at stake; it should not be said at the end of the contest that a particular programme had been rejected when, in fact, it was not at issue. The Congress itself or the A.I.C.C. ultimately laid down the policy but the President could make a difference in the carrying out of

that policy; the Congress President was not a mere Speaker.

In a dramatic contest, Bose was elected President by a narrow majority. On February 22, twelve members of the Working Committee announced their resignation, saying that the time had come when the country should have a clear-cut policy not based on compromise between different incompatible groups of the Congress; Bose should form a homogeneous cabinet, representing the views of the majority. Nehru's resignation followed soon. In his covering letter, he said he had tried to bring about a compromise. He had suggested to Bose to withdraw the charges made in his pre-election statements about rightists compromising with the British Government. He felt strongly that he could not offer his co-operation to Bose; equally strongly he felt he was not with those who had resigned. He had been pressed hard to join others in their resignation but he had refused.

The Tripuri Congress was to meet, and in the absence of Gandhi, Nehru opened the Khadi Exhibition. He said then something which is still not understood fully:

> "I call myself a socialist and as such I do believe that large-scale industries have a place in this country. Anything that increased the material well-being of the country is bound to have its repercussions on the people. But we shall never be able to move the India of the rural masses through mere multiplication of big factories. It can only be reached through Khadi and village industries."

At Tripuri, Bose was ill, and in his absence, the presidential address was read by Sarat Bose. On the second day, on Aney's resolution that discussion on the resolution dealing with misunderstandings arising out of the presidential election should be postponed, there were noisy scenes. Nehru rose to speak but he was interrupted. He said that Gandhi, as shown by his recent writings, was full of the coming

struggle and wanted the country to be prepared for it. It was time to be united and disciplined. Aney withdrew his resolution. On the last day of the resolution, Pandit Pant moved his resolution reaffirming faith in Gandhi and Mr. Rajagopalachari seconded it. Under the resolution, passed by a bare majority in the Subjects Committee and by a huge majority in the open session, the Congress President was to nominate the Working Committee for the coming year in accordance with Gandhi's wishes.

In the subsequent controversy, at an A.I.C.C. meeting in April, Bose resigned and asked Sarojini Naidu to preside. Nehru proposed that Bose be requested to withdraw his resignation and nominate afresh the Working Committee of 1938. Bose did not agree to Nehru's suggestion. The meeting broke up amid disorder. Congress leaders, including Nehru, were subjected to indignities. On the following day, when the A.I.C.C. met again, Nehru made his proposal again, as a way out of the controversy, but Bose declined to withdraw his resignation unless he could include what he called fresh blood into the Working Committee. Sarojini Naidu made an appeal to Bose to accept Nehru's proposal; two seats would soon be available for infusion of fresh blood. Bose's reply was contingent on what the A.I.C.C. would do. This was considered too vague. Nehru withdrew his resolution. Rajendra Prasad was elected President for the remaining part of the year.

At a question-and-answer session at the Gandhi Seva Sangh, at Brindaban, Gandhi was asked about his differences with the socialists and Nehru. He said:

> "There are differences between Jawaharlal and other socialist friends. My fundamental difference with the socialists is well-known. I believe in the conversion of human nature and in striving for it. They do not believe in this. But let me tell you that we are coming nearer to

one another. Either they are being drawn to me or I am being drawn to them. As for Jawaharlal, we know that neither of us can do without the other, for there is a heart unison between us which no intellectual difference can break."

The war brought turmoil to the Congress as to other institutions. The Working Committee declared its opposition to an imperialist war and reiterated its policy of opposing all attempts to impose a war on India. It repudiated the sending of troops to Egypt and Singapore and called upon all Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attending the next session. (The committee also discussed hunger-strikes, and Gandhi wrote: "Hunger-strike has positively become a plague. On the slightest pretext, some people want to resort to hunger-strikes.") Commenting later on the Working Committee resolutions, he said that on the war resolution he had had a conclusive defeat. He had drafted a resolution, so had Nehru, and Nehru's, he admitted, represented more truly than his the country's opinion and even the Working Committee's, as a whole. His resolution had been based on out-and-out non-violence. But Congressmen, barring individual exceptions, did not believe in non-violence. Those who did believe thought that it was the right thing only for a fight against the Government for wresting power. But the Congress had no non-violent message for the world.

On September 14, after much discussion, the Working Committee issued a long statement drafted by Nehru. The British Government had made India a party to the war in various ways without India's consent. The Congress had declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of fascism and nazism; it had seen in fascism and nazism intensification of the principle of imperialism against which the Indian people had struggled for many years. The

committee, therefore, must condemn unhesitatingly the latest aggression of the Nazi Government in Germany against Poland and sympathize with those who resisted it. The Congress had laid down that the issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people, and no outside authority could impose a decision upon them, nor could the Indian people permit their resources to be exploited for imperialist ends. The committee was aware that the Governments of Great Britain and France had declared that they were fighting for democracy and freedom and to put an end to aggression. But the history of the recent past was full of examples showing constant divergence between the spoken word, the ideals proclaimed, and the real motives and objectives. If the war was to defend the *status quo*, imperialist possessions, colonies, vested interests and privilege, then India could have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue was democracy and a world order based on democracy, then India was intensely interested in it. The committee failed to find any attempt to advance the cause of democracy or self-determination or any evidence that the present war declarations of the British Government were being, or were going to be, acted upon. The committee could not associate itself or offer any co-operation in a war which was conducted on imperialist lines, and which was meant to consolidate imperialism in India and elsewhere. The committee, therefore, invited the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims were in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that was envisaged and, in particular, how those aims were going to apply to India and to be given effect to at present. The real test of any declaration was its application in the present, for it was the present that would govern action today and give shape to the future.

This was a classic of a resolution, the best probably that Nehru ever drafted, and contained the seed of Congress policy till Independence.

On September 15, Gandhi said on the Congress manifesto:

"The Working Committee's statement on the world crisis took four days before it received final shape. Every member expressed his opinion freely on the draft that was, at the committee's invitation, prepared by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I was sorry to find myself alone in thinking that whatever support was given to the British should be given unconditionally. This could only be done on a purely non-violent basis. The author of the statement is an artist. Though he cannot be surpassed in his implacable opposition to imperialism in any shape or form, he is a friend of the English people. Indeed he is more English than Indian in his thoughts and make-up. He is often more at home with Englishmen than with his own countrymen. And he is a humanitarian in the sense that he reacts to every wrong, no matter where perpetrated. Though, therefore, he is an ardent nationalist, his nationalism is enriched by his internationalism. Hence, the statement is a manifesto addressed not only to his own countrymen, not only to the British Government and the British people but is addressed also to the nations of the world, including those that are exploiting like India. He has compelled India, through the Working Committee, to think not merely of her own freedom but of the freedom of the exploited nations of the world."

Gandhi exaggerated to emphasize his point. Others were to take advantage of it and repeat that Nehru was more of an Englishman than an Indian. Nehru was an Indian in his background and aspirations and his roots; he was an Englishman in his habits of efficiency and punctuality and in his modernity of outlook. Gandhi was to acknowledge it later.

The Viceroy was busy carrying on his confabulations. He invited about fifty leaders for interview; among them

were Gandhi, Nehru, Bose, Sardar Patel and Jinnah. Nothing concrete came of it. The Working Committee's statement of September 14 was discussed by the A.I.C.C. at Wardha on October 9. Leftist amendments calling for a more aggressive policy towards the government were rejected. On October 10, Gandhi stated his differences with the Working Committee. He thought that Congressmen were unprepared for non-violent defence against armed invasion; he stuck to non-violence. His position was, of course, confined to himself alone; he had to find out if he had any fellow traveller. Some members of the committee, about six of them, said that Gandhi had wronged them by saying that the whole committee was against him in his interpretation of their action in terms of non-violence. Gandhi's reply was it was not enough that they were with him in the interpretation he had put on non-violence. They had boldly to assert themselves at this juncture, but their humility would not allow them to do so. There was nothing against non-violence in voting for the resolution; the question was what one would do, and that was of consequence.

There were negotiations between Jinnah and Nehru in November, and Gandhi did not want to mar them in any way by any statement. Gandhi at this time also extended his full support to the Congress demand for a Constituent Assembly. Nehru had compelled him to study its implications. He was not free from scepticism, but he had been converted by hard facts. When Jinnah and Nehru were still engaged in negotiations, the Pirpur report containing Muslim League charges against Congress regimes was published and a Deliverance Day was to be observed by the Muslim League. The talks failed.

The war was progressing to Britain's disadvantage, and it was tempting to take advantage of it. But the Congress was keen on maintaining both high-mindedness and consistency. If, however, the British Empire was collapsing, what was to

be done? In June 1940, the Working Committee announced that it was unable to extend the creed of non-violence to national defence. The committee had been moved, under Nehru's influence, by the fall of France and other tragic events in Europe. This decision meant that the issue of violence or non-violence was irrelevant. The committee said plainly that it was unable to go to the full length with Gandhi but it recognized that he should be free to pursue his ideal in his own way and it absolved him from responsibility for the programme and activity which the Congress had to pursue, including the parallel organization of self-defence and maintenance of the country's security. The national struggle for independence was to continue on its non-violent course. According to Azad, Gandhi would continue to give his guidance and direction wherever necessary to the Congress Working Committee. According to Nehru, the difference between Gandhi's approach and that of the Working Committee must not lead people to think that there was a break between him and the Congress. It had been for twenty years his creation and child and nothing could break the bond. Gandhi was both "happy and unhappy", happy because he had been able to bear the strain of the break and unhappy because he could no longer carry with him those whom he had carried with him for so many years. After writing his editorial in *Harijan*, he saw Nehru's statement. He added a postscript appreciating Nehru's love for and confidence in him. His article, however, did not need any amendment. The readers had both the independent reactions. Good must come out of what Gandhi called "this separation".

Events in Europe were moving fast and the Working Committee met again in Delhi, in an emergency meeting. It repeated its demand for an immediate and unequivocal declaration of the full independence of India with new proposals; as an immediate step, a provisional national government should be formed, at the centre. These efforts

would enable the Congress to throw its full weight into the efforts for the effective organization of the defence of the country. What did "defence" mean? According to Azad and Mr. Rajagopalachari, the resolution meant full participation of the Congress in the war if its terms were granted. According to Nehru, to maintain India's own independence, for India's defence and the defence of freedom, they were prepared under their own direction to do their best. Gandhi was alone, and Ghaffar Khan resigned from the Working Committee because of his strict adherence to non-violence.

At Poona, at the end of July, the A.I.C.C. ratified the resolution of the Working Committee, by ninety-five votes to forty-seven. Gandhi was not present. Rajendra Prasad, Kripalani, Dr. P. C. Ghosh and Shankarrao Deo kept neutral. Leftist amendments called the resolution a surrender to imperialism, though they were withdrawn or rejected. Nehru's view was that there must be a strict and brief time-limit to the offer contained in the resolution; then the offer would relapse. Azad, who presided, said that everyone in the Congress wanted to go the whole length with Gandhi, if one could help it; but they could not close their eyes to hard facts. They had not the courage to declare that they would organize a state in the country without an armed force, and if they did, it would be wrong on their part. In all honesty, they could not go as far as Gandhi wanted them to go.

In one of the many interviews he gave at this time, Gandhi said the Congress had a number of leaders who could think for themselves. Azad was a great thinker of keen intellect and vast reading; Nehru was not a man to stand in awe of anyone.

The British Government was missing every possible opportunity. On August 8, 1940, the Viceroy announced what was known as the August Offer, under which the new constitution should be "primarily the responsibility of the Indians themselves" except that British obligations must be

fulfilled and minority opinion must not be overridden. Azad refused an invitation from the Viceroy, even to discuss it. By this time, Congress leaders were slowly coming back to Gandhi, as it was to happen several times. Differences between him and the Working Committee became thin. All Congress offers had been rejected. It was left to Gandhi to draft a resolution. It was formally moved by Nehru and seconded by Patel. The aim was independence. But there was a swing back to non-violence. Gandhi was prepared to lead again. The language of the resolution was in the main his. But it appealed to Nehru. Gandhi used to be the Congress draftsman; now it was Nehru. For the moment, Gandhi's ideas dominated. He was to be repudiated again.

VI

In October 1940, Vinoba Bhave inaugurated individual satyagraha. Nehru was chosen to succeed him on November 7 after giving due notice to the authorities. But he was arrested on October 31, later tried in the Gorakhpur prison and sentenced to four years' imprisonment for speeches he had delivered earlier in October. The Working Committee met in Bardoli. There were differences in the committee and Gandhi was relieved of official leadership of the Congress. In the middle of January 1941, the A.I.C.C. met to consider the political situation afresh. In a reference to the Bardoli resolution, Gandhi made his position clear in his speech. The resolution had been drafted by Nehru and changes had been made in it by a sub-committee. Finally, Gandhi said, the delegates should not go away with the idea that there was a rift in the Congress. The Working Committee had worked like members of a happy family. Some had suggested that he and Nehru were estranged. They had had differences from the moment they had become co-workers,

> "... and yet I have said for some years and say now that not Rajaji but Jawaharlal will be my successor. He says that he does not understand my language and that he speaks a language foreign to me. This may or may not be true. But language is no bar to a union of hearts. And I know this that when I am gone he will speak my language."

Gandhi's suspension of satyagraha was a reaction to the conditions then existing in the country but he wanted every single man to remain outside and do work. He would not let them lead an easy life. Nehru would ask for the diaries of one thousand of men. He was not going to sleep.

There were many uncertainties, and Gandhi was asked the question how, as he had declared Nehru as his legal heir, he liked the idea of a legal heir advocating guerilla warfare against the Japanese? What would happen to his *ahimsa,* when Nehru openly advocated violence? Gandhi replied that twenty-two years of preaching and practice of non-violence, however imperfect it had been, would not be suddenly wiped out by the mere wish of Nehru and Rajagopalachari, powerful though they were.

From Gandhi's teachings and writings, people had doubts on which side he was. Nehru had told him that he had heard people in Lahore and Delhi saying that Gandhi had turned pro-Japanese. He could only laugh at such suggestions. He was sincere in his passion for freedom and he could not take a step which would involve India in merely changing masters. In a letter to Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek, on June 14, 1942, Gandhi wrote:

> "I have felt greatly attracted towards your great country and, in common with my countrymen, our sympathy has gone out to you in your terrible struggle. Our mutual friend, Jawaharlal, whose love of China is only excelled, if at all, by his love of his own country, has kept in

intimate touch with the development of China's struggles."

On another occasion, Gandhi told a *Manchester Guardian* correspondent that Azad and Nehru believed in armed resistance and so did many Congressmen. He was, therefore, in a hopeless minority, whether in the country or in the Congress.

At the historic Bombay session of the A.I.C.C. in August, which was to launch the "Quit India" movement, a number of amendments were moved by the communists to the Working Committee resolution. These were mainly aimed at further negotiations with the Muslim League for a settlement with the British. Nehru replied to the opposition and repeated the offer of co-operation to the government outlined in the official resolution:

> "This resolution is not a threat. It is an invitation. It is an explanation: it is an offer of co-operation. It is all that. But still, behind it there is a clear indication that certain consequences will follow if certain events do not happen. It is an offer of co-operation of free India. On any other terms, there will be no co-operation. On any other terms, our resolution promises only conflict and struggle."

Gandhi, while congratulating the communists who had pressed their amendments and the delegates who had voted against the resolution, said they should have listened to Azad and Nehru; had they done so, it would have been clear to them that the right to the minorities which they now wanted the Congress to concede had already been conceded by the Congress.

Three amendments were withdrawn; the others were rejected. The Working Committee's resolution was carried with an overwhelming majority and only communists, thirteen of them, voted against it.

In his speech, Gandhi said:

> "In Jawaharlal's scheme of free India, no privileges or the privileged classes have a place. Jawaharlal considers all property to be state-owned. He wants planned economy. He wants to reconstruct India according to plan. He likes to fly: I don't."

About the armed forces, Gandhi said that soldiers that came to him, to Nehru and to Azad, and said that they were wholly with him and were tired of government tyranny but Gandhi told them that they should tell the government that their hearts were with the Congress but that they would not leave their posts.

On August 9, the leaders were arrested and the people rose in revolt everywhere. The stirring events of that month have been repeatedly told.

On August 14, Gandhi, in a letter to the Viceroy, said that while the government thought that the freedom of India was not necessary for winning the cause of freedom in the world and he thought exactly the opposite, he had taken Nehru as his measuring rod. Gandhi's personal contacts had made him feel much more the misery of the impending ruin of China and Russia than he could or the Viceroy could. In that misery, he tried to forget his old quarrel with imperialism. Nehru dreaded much more than Gandhi did the success of nazism and fascism. They had argued for days together. Nehru had fought against Gandhi's position with great passion, but the logic of facts overpowered him.

There was a fast, which caused much anxiety, by Gandhi against the misrepresentations and policies of the government, attempted mediation by non-party leaders and there were other hectic events in the following months. Gandhi was busy throughout. On May 15, 1943, in a letter

to Lord Samuel, Gandhi discussed point by point the government case and the Congress case and said:

> "It is well to remember that Pandit Nehru was and, I have no doubt, still remains, an intimate friend of Sir Stafford Cripps at whose invitation he had come from Allahabad. He could, therefore, leave no stone unturned to bring the negotiations to a successful issue. The history of the failure is yet to be written; when it is, it will be found that the cause lay elsewhere than with the Congress."

VII

At the San Francisco conference in 1945, which was to prepare the draft for the U. N. Charter, Firoze Khan Noon denounced Gandhi as pro-Japanese and demanded that he should yield the leadership to Nehru. On May 4, Gandhi replied to Firoze Khan Noon saying that he had called Nehru his successor. Nehru did not need to come to the front; he would be in the front. The government would not let him work as he would. He and Nehru were friends. They were both servants of the people and the platform of service was as big as the world; it was never overcrowded. There was always room for more people on the platform and they had no differences on Independence. They were always brothers in arms, though Nehru had, undoubtedly, the advantage of youth over him. At the conference of leaders in Simla, which the Viceroy called, soon after the release of Nehru, Azad, Patel and others, nothing useful emerged.

On September 22, when the A.I.C.C. met, Nehru moved a resolution on the "Struggle of 1942 and After", congratulating the nation on the courage and endurance

with which it had stood the onslaught of the British power and conveying sympathy to all those who had suffered during the military, police and ordinance rule. Nehru referred to the Communists and said: 'If there was a people's war movement, it was this anti-imperialist uprising. And if there are people who think that there is no other, they are on the wrong path." Nehru also moved a resolution on the Indian National Army, which had been formed in Malaya and Burma in 1942 under the leadership of Subhas Bose. The resolution referred to the circumstances in which the army had been raised and said that it would be a tragedy if the officers, men and women of the army were punished for the offence of having worked, however mistakenly, for the freedom of India. A resolution on the Viceroy's proposals rejected them but laid down that the Congress would contest the elections, which were to be held on a narrow franchise, to demonstrate the will of the people on the issue of immediate transfer of power.

Gandhi did not attend the A.I.C.C. session but was present at the Working Committee meetings. In October, there seemed to be differences in outlook again between Gandhi and Nehru. Gandhi raised the matter in a letter to Nehru and said that, if the differences between them were fundamental, they should be known to the public. The differences were on the social and economic objectives of the Congress after Independence. As freedom seemed to be near, the differences, however small, assumed importance. The Working Committee was to discuss the question, but Gandhi wanted that he and Nehru should understand each other's position. The bond between them was not only political: it was something unbreakable. It was, therefore, desirable that in the political field also they should understand each other clearly. Gandhi said he was an old man and he had named Nehru as his heir; it was necessary that the heir should understand him. Then Gandhi wrote:

> "The essence of what I have said is that man should rest content with what are his real needs and become self-sufficient. If he does not have this control, he cannot save himself. After all, the world is made up of individuals just as it is the drops that constitute the ocean . . . this is the well known truth.
>
> "While I admire modern science, I find that it is the old looked at in the true light of modern science which should be reclothed and refashioned aright. You must not imagine that I am envisaging our village life as it is today. The village of my dreams is still in my mind. After all, every man lives in the world of his dreams. My ideal village will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and darkness as animals. Men and women will be free and able to hold their own against anyone in the world. There will be neither plague, nor cholera, nor smallpox; no one will be idle, no one will allow any luxury. Every one will have to contribute his quota of manual labour."

In a letter to Gandhi, Nehru said that the question before them was not one of truth versus non-truth or non-violence versus violence. True co-operation and peaceful methods were the aim and a society which encouraged these must be their objective. The question was how to achieve this society and what its content should be. They had to put down certain objectives which should be the immediate requirements for the country and for everyone. They must find out specifically how to attain them speedily. The question of Independence had been considered in this context. How far it was desirable for the Congress to consider these fundamental questions, involving various philosophies of life, it was for Gandhi to judge.

Gandhi resumed the correspondence after a month. He said that the main premises of Nehru's letter were common

ground between them. Their talk of the previous day had made him glad. It was necessary that they should understand each other well and that others should also clearly understand where Gandhi and Nehru stood. It would not matter if ultimately they might agree to differ so long as they remained one at heart, as they were today. Gandhi summed up some of the points of agreement. But the correspondence could not be continued because of quick political developments.

A twelve-point Congress election manifesto was issued in October and it included all the points which Gandhi or Nehru would have liked to include.

In November, the Indian National Army trial was held at the Red Fort in Delhi and Nehru appeared on the side of the defence along with others. After many years, he again put on the barrister's robes. It was a sensational trial in which the issue was whether loyalty to the country, though subject to British rule, or loyalty to the King-Emperor was supreme. Ultimately, all accused, though technically sentenced, were set free. Gandhi appealed to the Viceroy. The Commander-in-Chief, Auchinleck, took a commonsense view. It was clear the Empire was going. In Nehru's words, it had become a trial of strength between the will of the Indian people and the will of those who had ruled our India and it was the will of people which triumphed in the end.

In April 1946, the second Simla Conference began, on the occasion of the visit to this country of the Cabinet Mission, consisting of the three British ministers, Pethwick Lawrence, Alexander and Cripps. Azad, Nehru, Ghaffar Khan and Sardar Patel were the Congress representatives. At the request of the Working Committee and the Cabinet Mission, Gandhi was present in Simla. After the talks, the whole country was discussing the proposals which the Cabinet Mission published. Gandhi was mostly in Delhi and spoke almost daily at prayer meetings. In Kashmir, Nehru was

arrested for defying a ban when he went impetuously on a short visit to the state to appear at Sheikh Abdullah's trial. Gandhi could not assess Nehru's action in rushing to Kashmir when the Working Committee needed him. Both Azad, the Congress President, and the Viceroy moved in the matter and arrangements were made for Nehru's quick return. The Congress accepted the long-term proposals of the Cabinet Mission, having rejected the interim proposals.

Nehru took over from Azad as Congress President. At the A.I.C.C. meeting of July 6, Nehru said the question before them was not merely that they should accept or reject any particular resolution on the merits or demerits of the proposed Constituent Assembly. That question was a very vital one and concerned the country's Independence. The official resolution was opposed by the socialists and they quoted some remarks which Gandhi had made in his prayer speeches. Gandhi recommended the resolution to the house. This was no time for dalliance or ease. He had told Nehru that he himself should wear the crown of thorns for the sake of the nation and he had agreed. The Constituent Assembly was going to be no bed of roses but only a bed of thorns; but they must not avoid it. It did not mean that everybody should want to go into it. Only those who were fit for the task because of their legal training or special talent should go there. It was not a prize to be sought as a reward but a duty to be faced. There were other reasons why he wanted them to join the Constituent Assembly. This was no occasion for fasting or civil disobedience. The alternative was constructive work to which they had never done justice.

On July 7, the A.I.C.C. ratified the steps taken by the leadership by a large majority. In an article, in *Harijan*, Gandhi said that he could not subscribe to the dangers pointed out by the opposition in the A.I.C.C. He was rather afraid of the dangers from within, like laziness of mind and body and craving for prizes.

In the following days, Gandhi not only made speeches on the various problems of Independence but answered questions put to him on behalf of various interests. The Raja of Aundh discussed with him the question of the princes introducing in their states the kind of constitution which had been introduced and was working in Aundh. Gandhi suggested to the Raja that he should see Nehru if he really wanted the people to judge what they wanted. The princes had taken the lead only in copying the bad points of the British and were not fit to experiment with self-government. His advice was that they should make Nehru their chief minister, and if they were in earnest, Nehru would present them with an outline of a constitution and he would naturally consult the people.

In July 1946, the Congress accepted the Viceroy's proposals for the immediate formation of an interim government. As President of the Congress, Nehru wrote to Jinnah suggesting a coalition government. Jinnah replied that the Wardha resolution of the Congress did not call for revision of the decision of the Muslim League. The League's Direct Action Day followed with unfortunate consequences. On August 24, the personnel of the interim national government, led by Nehru, was announced. In a broadcast, the Viceroy appealed to the Muslim League to reconsider its decision not to join the government and hoped it would desist from violence of speech and action. But events followed a violent course.

On September 2, Nehru and his colleagues took charge of the interim government. The ministers called on Gandhi at Bhangi colony and a note prepared by him was read out to them:

> "You have been in my thoughts since the prayers. Abolish the Salt Tax. Remember the Dandi march. Unite Hindus and Muslims. Remove untouchability. Take to Khadi."

It was his day of silence. After a short prayer, each minister received Gandhi's blessings.

At a prayer meeting, Gandhi amplified the contents of his note. The Viceroy was still there with the army. But sooner rather than later, complete power would be in their hand. If Nehru, though uncrowned, was going to be their first prime minister, and his colleagues fully and worthily did their part, the Viceroy would then himself vacate his palace and it would be turned into a hospital for the poor, including the Harijans, who were the poorest of the poor.

On October 7, Gandhi referred to the negotiations that were going on between Nehru and Jinnah and expressed the hope that the Muslim League would join the interim government. But the negotiations broke down.

Reports of the communal outbreak in Bihar pained Gandhi greatly. Nehru had said to the guilty parties that the central government would never tolerate such barbarism and that they would even use aerial bombing to put it down. But, said Gandhi, that was the way of the British regime, which was not representative of the people. Was the Congress to use the methods of destruction against the people whose representative it was? By suppressing the riots with the help of the military, they would be suppressing India's freedom. But what was Nehru to do if the Congress had lost its control over the people? If they were not amenable to discipline, it would be better to give up the government.

On another occasion, Gandhi said that Nehru found the ground slipping from under his feet. But he would not let that happen. That is why he was in Bihar and he would stay there as long as necessary. When Gandhi was urged to go to East Bengal to comfort the people there, Nehru, without a moment's hesitation, said that Gandhi's place was there, especially in Noakhali.

The Noakhali chapter reads like a page from the Bible. The Friends' Service Unit sent Gandhi some Christmas

presents, cigarettes, playing cards and soap. Gandhi playfully distributed all the gifts but he kept the packet of cigarettes for Nehru, who was expected to visit him shortly. In his prayer speech on December 31, Gandhi referred to the visit of Nehru and Kripalani, President of the Congress, and said they had come in search of Hindu-Muslim unity; they had not come for any proposals. They were given some written suggestions by Gandhi to be placed before the Working Committee. Gandhi's advice was that if it was not too late to go back on the Constituent Assembly, it was still the best course. The second best step would be to accept the Cabinet Mission statement with the joint interpretation of it by the Congress and by Jinnah.

In leaving Srirampur, where Gandhi was, Nehru said: "It is always a pleasure and inspiration to meet this young man of seventy-seven. We always feel a little younger and stronger after meeting him and the burdens we carry seem a little lighter."

In April 1947, the Asian Relations Conference was held in New Delhi on the initiative of Nehru. Gandhi attended it. In his speech he said that he should confess his ignorance. Nehru had asked him long before this conference was to take place whether it would be possible for him to attend it. He had to say at that time that he was very sorry that he would not be able to come. But the conference had proved to be much more important than it was expected to be.

After some days in Delhi, Gandhi was returning to Bihar because his work in Delhi was over for the present. He was a prisoner both of the Viceroy and Nehru. His talks with the Viceroy were over for the present and Nehru was too big to restrain him from going where he thought his duty lay. On April 12, Gandhi referred to the publication of a report in a responsible paper saying that he was leaving Delhi because he had quarrelled with the Working Committee. The statement was completely wrong. Their dis-

cussions had always been carried on in the spirit of love, whatever the difference of opinion. Why should he ask the permission of the Viceroy and Nehru to leave Delhi, if he had quarrelled with either of them?

On April 15, a joint appeal by Gandhi and Jinnah was published calling upon all the communities to refrain from violence and disorder. On April 16, in Bihar, Gandhi referred to the statement which he had signed at the suggestion of the Viceroy while he was in Delhi. On April 28, he announced that he would have to go to Delhi again on April 30 as there was a call from Nehru and Kripalani that he should be in Delhi for the Working Committee meeting on May 1. He did not like the idea of leaving Bihar but he had to go.

On May 7, Gandhi left Delhi for Calcutta and on the train he wrote a letter to Lord Mountbatten saying that it would be a blunder of the first magnitude for the British to be a party in any way whatsoever to the division of India. In one of his prayer meetings, he said that if the people at the top went wrong, could the goodness of the people at the bottom assert itself? It was the certain duty of those at the bottom to bring down the wrong top. Nehru was at the top now. But in reality he was sustained by them. If he went wrong, those at the bottom would remove him without trouble.

On May 25, again, Gandhi went to Delhi, in answer to Nehru's urgent call. Patel and Nehru had telegraphed him to go to Mussoorie, where they had to go for a short rest, but Gandhi could not go. In Delhi, the Chinese Ambassador along with Nehru met Gandhi and asked him about the situation. Gandhi said that he was an optimist. It seemed everyone was for throwing all foreign yokes, though there had been much bloodshed. Who could predict the future?

On June 1, Gandhi spoke at length on the quality of discipline required in a free people. He gave a British example.

Today he wanted the people of India to realize that Independence was at their doors. The Viceroy was only the nominal head of the cabinet. They would help the Viceroy by accepting no help from him in the government of the country. Their own uncrowned king now was Nehru. He was working and slaving for them, not as their king but as their first servant. It was his desire, through the service of India, to serve the world. Nehru was an international figure and he had friendly relations with all the foreign ambassadors who were now in India. But it was not possible for him alone to run the government, if the people by their indiscipline spoiled the work. For he could not, as did the former authorities, resort to rule of the swords. That would be neither Panchayat raj nor Nehru raj. It was the duty of everyone to make the task of the ministers easy and not to force their hands in any way. Nehru wanted to go to Kashmir again but his place was at Delhi and Gandhi offered to go to Kashmir in his place.

On the morning of June 1, Gandhi began to muse for a time. He was lost in thought. He found himself all alone. Even Patel and Nehru thought that his reading of the political situation was wrong. They wondered if he had not deteriorated with age. But he must speak as he felt. He could not bear to see Ghaffar Khan's grief. Probably all of them were right and he alone was floundering in darkness. If the evil he apprehended overtook India, let posterity know his agony. Let it not be said that Gandhi was a party to India's vivisection. Everyone today was for Independence. Therefore, there was no other help. He likened independence-cum-partition to a wooden loaf. If the Congress leaders ate it, they would die of colic: if they left it, they would starve.

VIII

The Viceroy returned from London with the British proposals. They were discussed with the Congress and Muslim League leaders. But they were to be kept a secret till June 3. At his prayer meeting, Gandhi asked the people to check their curiosity. They should not concern themselves with what the Viceroy had brought from London; they should rather concern themselves with what they had to do. They should turn the searchlight inwards. He had said that Nehru was the uncrowned king of India but the real rulers were the people. Nehru cannot be replaced today when the charge was being taken from Englishmen. As a Harrow boy, a Cambridge graduate and a barrister, he should carry on the negotiations with Englishmen. But a time was fast coming when Indians would have to elect their first President of the Republic that was coming.

On the evening of June 3, Lord Mountbatten spoke to the people on the radio, and he was followed by Nehru, Jinnah and Baldev Singh. In his broadcast, Nehru said that they all disliked the vivisection of India. But they could not let India bleed further; a surgical operation was to be preferred under the circumstances. The British plan proposed the creation of Pakistan, if demanded by the Muslim League representatives of the Muslim majority provinces, and it provided for the partition of the provinces, notably Bengal and Punjab, if demanded by a majority of the either party in the legislative assemblies of the provinces. On June 4, Gandhi said that he had already told the people again and again that to yield even an inch to force was wholly wrong. The Working Committee held that it had not yielded to the force of arms but had yielded only to the force of circumstances. The vast majority of Congressmen did not want any section of the people in the Union as unwilling partners. They had reluctantly agreed to the secession from the Indian Union

of those parts which had boycotted the Constituent Assembly. He expressed sorrow at the mistaken policy of the Muslim League. He had done his best to see that the Cabinet Mission statement of May 16 was accepted but he had failed. Nehru and the Viceroy had said that nothing had been imposed on any one. The agreement would be varied at any stage by mutual consent because it was a voluntary act of the parties. He hoped that it was a final agreement between the parties: therefore, all violence should now stop. Gandhi's speeches revived the hope that partition might be avoided.

On the North-West Frontier question, there were important differences between Gandhi and the Working Committee. On June 7, Gandhi wrote to Nehru that the gulf between them was deeper than he had feared. He might differ from the Working Committee but he would recommend its decisions for acceptance. He was of the opinion that they could still mend the situation to a large extent.

The socialists and the communists met Gandhi and discussed the situation with him. Gandhi impressed on the socialists that power was being transferred to Indian hands and they should show a spirit of co-operation and differences should be discussed in a friendly spirit. The socialists did not understand the ABC of socialism. Could they not see that there could be no socialism in India as long as they were in the grip of communalism? To the communists, he said that they wasted their time and energy in hair-splitting, fault-finding and picking holes. If they discovered any difficulty anywhere, they exploited it to make propaganda and to spread disaffection against the government without making a proper enquiry. Was there nothing which was worthy of their co-operation? They should think for a moment that they were in Nehru's position. They should be prepared to shoulder responsibility or co-operate with him.

On June 12, Gandhi asked the question if readjustment of the geography of India meant two nations. The division

having been agreed upon, unity became difficult. If the Muslims looked upon themselves as a separate nation, they could not become so if the non-Muslims did not respond. The Muslim majority areas might call themselves Pakistan but the rest and the largest part of India did not call itself Hindustan. Did the Hindus feel that it would become the abode of Hindus? The Parsees and Christian communities had no other home. Nehru refused to talk of any non-Pakistan areas as Hindustan. Only some Muslim majority areas had seceded. Men and women were not known by what they called themselves but by their leaders. How was this Union to behave?

On June 21, Gandhi motored with Nehru to Hardwar, when he heard of the difficulties of the refugees who had been settled there from the Frontier Province and the Punjab.

Developments in the Frontier Provinces made Gandhi extremely unhappy. By accepting partition, the Congress had averted an open civil war but only at the cost of smouldering hatred. He saw in the consequences of partition confirmation of his worst fears. The Congress leadership had accepted partition to save the country from the Muslim League's subversive activities. Nehru had said they had cut off their head to get rid of their headache.

There was criticism that Jinnah had become the Governor-General of Pakistan, but Lord Mountbatten was being retained as the Governor-General of India. It had been suggested that the Congress leaders had weakened in their attitude to England. Gandhi asked the critics to get rid of such suspicions. They should not imagine that Nehru and Patel would ever bow their knee or bootlick anyone. After August 15, it was within their power to ask anyone to become Governor-General. If he had his choice he would have chosen a Harijan girl.

In July, when moving the resolution on the National Flag

in the Constituent Assembly, Nehru compared the Congress flag and the flag of free India. Both the flags had the same colours: they had come to them from the message which Gandhi had delivered to the country.

Gandhi heard of the desire of Indians in the French and the Portuguese territories in India to be free. The British were retiring but not the French and Portuguese. But Nehru, who had vindicated the freedom of Indonesia, was not going to let down his own kith and kin in French and Portuguese India. Similarly, when he heard of the trouble in the French possession of Chandernagore, he said that Nehru was there to look after such affairs.

In the following days, when there were disturbances and killings in Calcutta and in several places in the Punjab, Gandhi was asked to be present almost everywhere. He was ready to act according to Nehru's advice. There were grave disturbances in Delhi itself and Nehru, who had at great risk rushed to the danger spots, said in a broadcast that in a military or police sense, they would put down the trouble, but they were not going to live in India just with the help of the military and without any self-restraint. At one stage, in answer to constant criticism, Gandhi said that the leaders in charge of the government were the best that India possessed. Some people were dissatisfied with them. He would ask them to produce better men if they could, and he would advise Nehru to hand over the reins. After all, Patel was an old man and Nehru, though not old in years, looked old and haggard under the burden he was carrying, and they were doing their utmost. They were slaving for the people, though they would only act according to their light.

Gandhi was active in soothing the people's spirits and giving them comfort, while asking for their sympathy and support to the government. The leaders of the government were not ungrateful. They had agreed to partition but they were not going to let down Gandhi as far as ideals and principles were

concerned. At a mass meeting in Delhi, Nehru made a fervent appeal to the people of India to follow the great lead given by Gandhi. He called upon them to make up their minds which path they were going to follow, the path pointed out by Gandhi or the path on which they had been led, in the past many days, by the anti-social elements in the country.

Nehru had made a visit to Kashmir after India's intervention against Pakistani aggression and brought some flowers for Gandhi from Baramula. Gandhi said that the flowers were beautiful, but the beauty of the glory of the land was being marred by the shedding of blood.

Kripalani wanted to resign from Congress Presidentship because he had neither been consulted by the government nor had been taken into their full confidence; the government could not ignore the Congress party. He revealed that Gandhi felt that in the circumstances the resignation was justified. To Gandhi, Nehru and Patel were the heads of the government; their hold on the Congress machine was unquestioned. They identified themselves with the party. Why then should they accept the Congress President's overriding power? The question was to repeat itself in subsequent years. But at that time it seemed very simple, specially to Gandhi. He attended the Working Committee meeting and proposed Narendra Deva's name as the new Congress President. Nehru supported Narendra Deva's nomination but some were opposed to it. Subsequently, at the request of Nehru and Patel, Rajendra Prasad agreed to become Congress President. He asked Gandhi for advice. But Gandhi did not like Rajendra Prasad taking over Congress Presidentship. Rajendra Prasad wanted to withdraw but he subseqently changed his mind.

Early in 1948, Gandhi undertook his last fast. He had to answer many questions on its propriety and timing.

Some people had said that Gandhi had undertaken the

fast because he had sympathy for the Muslims. Gandhi said they were right; his sympathy had always been with the minorities. The fast was against the Muslims also to enable them to stand up to their Hindu and Sikh brethren. Muslims were in the habit of praising him and Nehru and blaming Patel. Some blamed Patel for his remark that it would be difficult for the Muslim Leaguers to become friends overnight. But most Hindus held this view. Muslim League friends should live down Patel's remark and by their conduct, not only by their declarations, disprove it. Nehru had not the method and manner of Patel but Patel was his valued colleague. If Patel was the enemy of the Muslims, Jawaharlal would ask him to retire.

Patel sent word that he would do anything that Gandhi might wish. Gandhi suggested that the first priority should be given to the question of Pakistan's share of the cash assets withheld by the Union Government. The Union Cabinet met round Gandhi's bed to consider the question soon after he began his fast. Hindus and Sikhs were angrier with him than ever. Nehru addressed a large meeting at Delhi and said that the loss of Gandhi's life would mean the loss of India's soul. He appealed to the people to maintain communal harmony and save his life. Besides other relief measures, the government would arrange accommodation for every refugee in Delhi within the next one week.

In a dictated message, Gandhi insisted that critics were wrong in separating Patel from Nehru. Patel was not anti-Muslim.

On January 18, Gandhi broke his fast when representatives of organizations in the city, including the representatives of the refugees, put their signatures to a seven-point declaration, covering the conditions laid down by Gandhi for breaking the fast. It was some time later that Nehru told Gandhi that he had been fasting along with him from the day before. Gandhi was deeply moved. As soon as Nehru left, he wrote

a note to him: "Now break your fast. May you live for many long years and continue to be the Jawahar of India. Bapu's blessings."

Again and again, Gandhi referred to the sufferings of the refugees and said that Nehru was doing all that was possible. His heart had bled for them. He had asked refugees to stand with him. All civilized people appreciated the value of such acts of leaders of men. Nehru had set an example before the whole country. More refugees were now attracted to Delhi. It proved the popularity of Nehru's example.

On January 20, an attempt was made to throw a bomb at Gandhi by Madan Lal, a refugee from Punjab, at the prayer meeting in Birla House. Gandhi remained unruffled. No one was injured. The country was stricken with apprehension.

On January 30, Gandhi was busy again with the problem of differences between Patel and Nehru. They worried him. He wanted them to hold together. At 4 P.M. Patel went to see him. Nehru and Azad were to see him after the evening prayer. At 5 P.M. he took out his watch and told Patel that it was time for his prayer. As he was going to the prayer meeting, he was shot dead by Nathu Ram Godse. It was one of the major crucifixions in the history of man.

Nehru rushed to the spot and sobbed like a child. In a a broadcast to the nation, he said:

> "The light has gone out of our lives. . . . Yet I am wrong, for the light that shone in this country was no ordinary light. . . and a thousand years later that light will still be seen in this country and the world will see it. For that light represented the living truth."

It was to be the refrain of Nehru's life, to the day of his own death.